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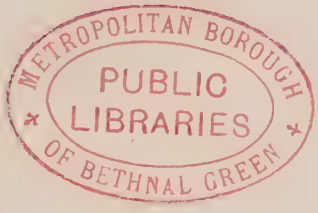
FAIR PERTHSHIRE

by

HAMISH MILES

With eight illustrations in colour and seventy-six in black and white
by
JOHN McGHIE

"*The fairest portion of the Northern Kingdom.*"
SCOTT.



LONDON
JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LTD.

First published in 1930

941.32
HSC

Printed in Great Britain by Richard Clay & Sons, Ltd., Bungay, Suffolk.

To S.M.
AND
H.A.D.M.

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I DROVE once with an old farmer in his trap along the winding switchback road that runs up from the Blackwater to the Spittal of Glen Shee and the Cairnwell. It was a glowing afternoon of late summer, and the heavy-footed old mare tugged rather wearily between the creaking shafts of the "machine." Mercifully, on the head of one of the steepest and roughest braes, he stopped for a moment. And while the mare stood gaining her second breath, he sat there gazing in patriarchal calm at the view before us—Ben Gulabin rising steep and scarred at the meeting of Glen Beg and Glen Lochy, beyond, the lonely ridges of Glas Thulachan and the Carn-an-Righ, and nearer at hand, over a leaning dyke, the green and easy slopes between the Meall Uaine and Ben Earb.

Something of an old man's restlessness was upon him; he had set out on this drive for no reason but to satisfy his love of the country that he knew—to see it all again, once and for sure, before the business of harvest came and the long binding months of winter. And for a long time he sat without a word, rubbing his knee with the handle of his whip, gazing intently at the all-encompassing hills. And then he passed judgment.

"Hills!" he said, slowly and with a great finality. "And hills back o' them again. . . . Hills . . . and hills . . . and hills!"

He drove on, silent.

But in his tone he had conveyed what a man might struggle for hours to express about that country—the sense of its wide unpathed spaces, the rhythm of glen beyond glen, the humility of man and his works, overlooked always by the great hills, so impersonal yet so living, that rise above him in light and in darkness. They are silent, yet speak. They stand each alone, yet in communion. They reach out one to another, and envelop all that is between them with the sense of their presence.

In the county through which we shall be straying, the hills are

seldom far away, hardly ever out of sight, never out of mind. On the whole, however, it is with the human life beneath them, past and present, that we shall be concerned. Perthshire is a county with singular variety of surface: remember that it includes the rich fertility of the Carse of Gowrie as well as the wilderness of the Moor of Rannoch, Dunblane and Dalnaspidal, Strathearn and Glen Garry. The same variety is in its life and history, and we must try to see something of it all.

But I have not attempted in these miscellaneous pages to write either a guidebook or a history. In both respects Perthshire has been amply provided for. I have not even covered every parish in its borders, although I think that our wanderings will take us into most. And I have even omitted to add one more to the numerous descriptions of the noble city of Perth itself.

Is an apology required for that? It probably is. And I give it frankly. About Perth I could set down nothing that has not been written before, in books familiar and readily accessible. Its history and antiquities—from the mythical legionary with his "*Ecce Tiberim!*" to the growth of St. Johnstoun, the battle of Clan Chattan and Clan Quhele, the Fair Maid, the mystery of the Gowrie conspiracy, and onward—have all been treated more fully and with greater knowledge than I could treat them here. My interest has been primarily in the county. And I offer not only an apology, but a confession—namely, that I have very small acquaintance with Perth itself. Chance has made me there only a transient visitor; and if I were to venture on purely personal knowledge of the city, the picture might be too fragmentary to please either the learned resident or the enquiring traveller. For it seems to centre, somehow, on the fascinating platforms of the General Station; there is the business of getting luggage down from the racks, glimpses of prisons, dyeworks, distilleries, the cries of the porters with the long-drawn vowel of "Pe-e-erth," the majestic bearing of the station-master, so long frock-coated and top-hatted and buttonholed, the large important clock, the baskets of potted flowers suspended beside it, the imposing spread of the bookstall, certain confusions of dogs, fishing-rods, bundles of game, and a fresh keenness even in the wind blowing down the sloping roadway up into the town. . . . Or again, at other seasons, there might be memories of a very late supper of cold grouse at

the Station Hotel, a very hot rum punch at the Salutation, recollections of stamping feet in trains waiting to start after a day of lamb-sales, and long, detailed discussions of prices—of why cross and half-breds had dropped this month, of stots and stirks keeping up their prices, lambs off the Mains of Mause at 44/9, Glendelvine 40/-, Ford of Pitcur, 36/-, Balquhandy Hill, 41/-. . . . No, it is hardly enough to work on. . . .

Perthshire, in these days of renewed road travel, is becoming better and better known. Its position is so central in Scotland that almost everyone visiting the Highlands must touch it at one point or another. It is not extravagant to boast that, barring the splendours of the sea-lochs of the West Coast, the county holds within its marches examples of nearly everything that the Highlands in general have to show of natural beauty, in glen or moor or loch. Certainly its sporting facilities need no underlining. And I have put down the comment and information in the pages that follow, mainly for those who may wish to know some of the less familiar aspects of the county. For this reason I have said less of the Trossachs than of other places less celebrated: travellers nowadays are able to move more easily into wider explorations than they were even ten years ago; and with these I have tried, in some measure, to keep pace.

At the same time, I have not wished to regard Perthshire simply as a tourist's spectacle, a series of picturesque prospects and pleasant views. The tourist's season is one of two or three months in the year, and in the meanwhile the real life of the county moves steadily on: how few of those who drive blithely over our hill roads on an August day know how those solitudes appear in the gathering greyness of a November afternoon, or after the full fury of a January blizzard with a howling wind, and twenty-feet drifts, and the nearest snow-plough six miles down the road! (Or, for that matter, how few strangers know the exquisite gradations of early spring in the Highlands, the lapwings wheeling above the fresh ploughlands, the incomparable spring-call of the whaups over the uplands. . . .)

As I was thinking how, then, to describe my approach to these chapters, my hand fell on an interesting Scottish travel-book of the eighteenth century—the *Observations made in a Journey through the*

Western Counties of Scotland in 1792; and its author, Robert Heron, there gave his own "apology" in terms which, I felt, fitted my own case. Here is what he said:

"I was led sometimes to recollect the transactions of past times; and sometimes hurried on by imagination to conceive the possibilities of futurity. I confined not my views to any one particular tract of observation and enquiry. I was neither a sentimental, an agricultural, a commercial, a virtuoso, nor an antiquarian traveller; but a sort of compound of all these. . . . Only, I believe, it might have been better, if I had been either more a mere matter of fact man, or a more vigorous thinker."

With Mr. Heron's declaration of policy—and not least with his last proviso—I am ready to range myself. And with them in mind we may start upon our travels.

THE NORTH INCH, PERTH

I

Glen Ogle.—Lochearnhead.—The Clach Dearg of Ardvorlich.—The Braes of Balquhidder.—The MacGregors and the King's Forester.—The Sons of Rob Roy.—The abduction of Jean Key.—Inverlochlaraig.—Rob Roy's livestock.—Glen Gyle.—Mr. and Miss Wordsworth, with Mr. Coleridge, arrive there.—A Highland hostess.—Glasgow and Loch Katrine.—The Trossachs.—Warning reflections.—Loch Achray.—The toll road to Aberfoyle.—Loch Vennachar.—Callander.—Pass of Leny.—Loch Lubnaig.—Strathyre.

GLEN OGLE, from the lonely Loch Lairig Fala up on the watershed, runs down straight and steep to Lochearnhead, with the road on one side of the twisting, stony burn, and the railway on the other. Below the present road lie the remains of General Wade's road, disused for many years, but still visible, and with several of his bridges. And as it comes down and crosses the burn, the road comes into pleasant views of the western end of Loch Earn, with the bold pointed mass of Ben Vorlich behind.

White gables and painted porches; in summer the flaming masses of scarlet tropæolum on the cottage walls; a pleasant inn; the little chapel of St. Blane on the shore of the loch; the quiet bridge where the main road to St. Fillans starts off along the lochside—there is little to be said about Lochearnhead; but that little can be remembered with pleasure. The white walls of castellated Edinample rise among its trees a mile or so along the southern shore, below its waterfall and the long straight cut of its glen. The mild little steamer puffs quietly to and fro along the loch in summer, and can on occasion set up prodigious echoes with its siren from the recesses of Glen Vorlich or the slopes above Finglen. Two or three miles beyond Edinample lies Ardvorlich House (with a tiny pier on the loch), a centre of many stirring events in the wild days of clan feuds. One of them is commemorated by a standing-stone close to the road here, where lie the bones of six MacDonalds of Glencoe who rashly came across to harry Ardvorlich—and have never seen Glencoe again. At Ardvorlich is preserved a curious

talisman, widely known over this part of the Highlands as the Clach Dearg, or the red stone. It is a silver-mounted lump of rock crystal, its clarity faintly tinged with red, about the size of a duck's egg. Its origins are unknown, but it was long held to possess magical properties (being, of course, associated with those convenient persons the Druids, to whom so many oddments of folklore can be assigned); and even into the mid-nineteenth century there was a steady demand for water into which the Clach Dearg had been dipped, for it had a wonderful way with the diseases of cattle. For a time it was kept in the prosaic custody of a bank, to discourage suppliants. And in this house also, there took place that memorable incident with the severed head of the King's forester, of which more can be told later.

Ben Vorlich itself is an easy enough climb from hereabouts, and the customary path to the top is easy to follow. If the weather be moderately clear, Ben Nevis can be picked out to the north-west, and the couchant mass of Stirling Castle to the southward. But even without that, the view from Ben Vorlich takes in most of the Grampians with ease. The neighbouring peak of Stuc-a-Chroin, with the steep dip between, is a stiffer climb; but even without tackling that, it is worth while coming down this side and bearing down into Glen Ample to return to Lochearnhead.

. . . . . .

Balquhidder Station is an insignificant spot where the railway branches, and it is a good four miles from the trim little village of Balquhidder itself, which lies at the western end of Loch Voil, where the head-waters of the Balvaig burn come down from the Kirkton Glen.

"Let us go, lassie, go,
To the braes o' Balquither,
Where the blaeberries grow
'Mang the bonny Highland heather;
Where the deer and the rae,
Lightly bounding together,
Sport the lang simmer day
On the braes o' Balquither.

"I will twine thee a bower,
By the clear siller fountain,
And I'll cover it ower
Wi' the flowers o' the mountain;

LOCHEARNHEAD AND GLENOGLE

I will range through the wilds,
And the deep glens sae dreary,
And return wi' their spoils
To the bower o' my deary . . ."

Thus Robert Tannahill, the gentle weaver-poet who drowned himself in despair, but long enjoyed a wide posthumous popularity with this and other songs of the kind. But most of Balquhidder's fame comes from sterner scenes and wilder men. The Braes of Balquhidder, those steep slopes and lonely glens that run down to the northern shore of Loch Voil, were long a haunt of the lawless; and their isolation, set back from the main lines of road and rail, is still enough to let something of their old feeling survive.

This district was long in the hands of the Clan Laurin, who later came to be known as Maclarens; and much of its history is taken up with the deeds and misdeeds of that determined stock. They exercised a traditional right to bury their chiefs under the so-called stone of St. Angus, which remained in the Church of Balquhidder until the late eighteenth century, and also a right of precedence in entering that church for purposes of worship. In the year 1296 Conan, one of the heads of Clan Laurin's branches, made obeisance to Edward of England for the Balquhidder men; and with him, it is recorded, was "Duncan Alphynsone de Auchtunaghes," which is the name that now survives in the parish as Auchtoo.

The famous right to precedence over the kirk threshold, however, led to much strife in the end. For the dangerous Clan Gregor began to acquire land and standing in Balquhidder, and (the story goes) made a bargain with the Maclarens in a moment of peril. The latter had a feud with the men of Leny, which, at a date probably in the mid-fifteenth century, came to a head at the local fair of St. Angus. A quarrel broke out, over an insult to a half-witted man from Balquhidder; the Maclarens took up a position on the left bank of the Balvaig, about a mile below the Kirkton, and a murderous set-to was opened. The Leny men at first had the upper hand, and the proud Maclarens called for the aid of a party of the MacGregors who were standing on a neighbouring knoll. "Would they help—for the honour of Balquhidder?" "Ay, but on condition that they could for evermore share the precedence in Balquhidder kirk!" And in the heat of

the moment, the Maclarens said yea. The MacGregors rushed into the field with zest—and the wretched men of Leny were cornered and forced backward into a deep rocky pool, where they miserably perished. The place at this crook of the river long bore the name of " Linan an Seicachan," or the " Corpses' Linn."

The turbulent Maclarens had other violent affrays, north and south. But as time went on, it was the MacGregors who became their chief rivals along the banks of Loch Voil. The precedence question had all the seeds of strife in it, and smouldering quarrels blazed up inside the church itself in 1532, when the parish priest himself was slain in a brawl.

BALQUHIDDER

For the Gregalich were becoming the dangerous Ishmaelites of this part of the Highlands. Driven from one glen to another by successful enemies, the blood of outlawry was infused into their veins. They had a greatly feared leader about 1540–52 in one Duncan Laudasach MacGregor, who ravaged far and wide until he and his sons were beheaded by Campbell of Glen Orchy. And during the second half of the century there were countless, and largely ineffectual, measures directed against them.

In 1589 Balquhidder was the scene of one of their most notorious misdeeds—and one for which they paid heavily. The story began up in the royal forest of Glen Artney, where the King's deputy forester, John Drummond of Drummond-Ernoch in Strathearn, was out to bring down a supply of venison for the wedding festivi-

ties of James VI with Anne of Denmark. Earlier in the year this royal servant had cut off the ears of some of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, who had been caught poaching in the King's preserves; and needless to say, they had not forgiven. While Drummond was stalking, alone, he was set upon and slain. His murderers cut off his head, left his body exposed in the heather, and set off with their trophy across the hills towards the head of Glen Vorlich. Further vengeance was in their minds; their victim's sister was the wife of Stewart of Ardvorlich; and they hurried down the glen to her house. There they knocked, told some tale or other, and asked for food. They were bidden in, and the mistress of the house herself saw to their needs. Bread and cheese were set on the board, but suddenly, when her back was turned, they unwrapped the bloody head of her brother, stuffed some of the food in its mouth, and set it on the table facing her. . . . Some days passed before the distracted woman was found, wandering in starvation about the woods. . . .

But meanwhile the MacDonalds had escaped, still with their severed head, and made for Balquhidder. Knowing that the MacGregors there had also had a grudge against Drummond the forester, they hoped for support. And they got it. A glimpse of their foe's head roused the Gregalich blood. It was a Sunday. The MacGregors, headed by their chief Alistair of Glenstrae, marched with the MacDonald fugitives to Balquhidder church, and there set the ghastly head on a board inside the building. Passing before it one by one, they laid their hands upon it and swore to take the guilt of Drummond's death upon themselves, and to defend the Glencoe men against all comers.

The Privy Council issued Letters of Fire and Sword against the MacGregors when the news of the outrage reached the capital. And Lord Drummond, under royal authority, mustered an armed force with which he made a surprise attack on Balquhidder. Stewart of Ardvorlich was with him, and between them they slew every grown man they could lay hands on. Thirty-seven MacGregors, it is said, were slain at one farm alone.

There were other vengeances taken on the execrated race of the Gregalich, but so far as Balquhidder is concerned, this sombre tale of 1589–90 marked the climax of their violent history.

. . . . . .

But the village nowadays is a quiet, inviting place, clustering round its meeting of roads, and its view up the narrow sleeve of Loch Voil is a very pleasing one. Close to the new church stand the remains of the old, and the railed-in tombstones there are always pointed out as the grave of the most formidable and famous of the denizens of the Braes—Rob Roy MacGregor. Buried thereabouts he almost certainly is; but those stones are far older than the year 1734, when Rob Roy died up at Inverlochlaraig. The centre slab is of slate, is carved with a sword and the faint figure of a kilted man; it is claimed for the great man. The stone on the left is said to mark the grave of his wife Helen, and that on the left commemorates two of his five sons, Col and Robin Oig.

Much has been written of Rob Roy himself.

> "A famous Man is Robin Hood,
> The English ballad-singer's joy,
> And Scotland boasts of one as good,
> She has her own Rob Roy!"

wrote Wordsworth, after a ferryman in Glen Gyle had erroneously pointed out a tombstone thereabouts as that of the great cateran, and proceeded to describe, in somewhat idealising verses, how Robin

> ". . . was the poor man's stay;
> The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand,
> And all the oppress'd who wanted strength
> Had Robin's to command."

But the story of the youngest son, Robin Oig, is less familiar and is perhaps worth recalling. Stevenson, of course, brought in this unruly stripling to play the pipes with, or rather against, Alan Breck in *Kidnapped*, and does (if my recollection is right) make mention of his ultimate fate. But the details are curious.

At the time of the father's death, late in 1734, there was a bitter feud between the MacGregor family and the Maclarens of Invernenty in Balquhidder. The quarrel had arisen from some matter of land tenure, and Rob Roy's widow was a stern, unforgiving woman, fully prepared to carry on the feud from one generation to the next. Her eldest son Col died not long after his father, but Robin Oig, a youth of nineteen or so, was there to be his mother's tool. Throughout 1735 the quarrel smouldered, but

THE CHURCHYARD, BALQUHIDDER

in the next spring it burst into flame. Helen MacGregor apparently worked upon the lad to such a pitch that he one day voiced a vow that John Maclaren, the head of these foes, should die by his hand. And a voiced vow is a vow indeed. "I will shoot him," said Robin, "when I can get my father's gun back from Doune."

This famous gun had been under repair, but it came back, and Robin took it out loaded, along with a small bodyguard of friends, on the morning of March 4th. He made over for Invernenty and found his enemy ploughing the disputed land. He fired. Maclaren fell, mortally wounded, in the furrow. Robin and his friends fled.

But before taking to the heather, the MacGregor faction made across to the Invernenty steadings, and wreaked further vengeance on the Maclarens' cattle. The hue-and-cry, reproduced in the contemporary *Caledonian Mercury*, detailed the person and offences of the criminal:

"March 5, 1736. *That* John Maclaren of Beanchon in Balquhidder, Perthshire, vassal to his Grace the Duke of Athole, was, on the 4th instant, barbarously murdered by Robert Drummond * (alias MacGregor), commonly called Robin Oig, son to the deceased Rob Roy MacGregor, by a shot from a gun as he was ploughing, without the least provocation, whereof he instantly died: thereafter, he and others his accomplices, went to the town of Invernentie, and houghed, mangled, and destroyed 36 stots and a cow, belonging to Malcolm and Donald Maclarens, Drovers. Therefore, who ever shall apprehend the said Robert, so as he may be brought to trial, shall have 20 guineas reward from James Muirhead, at his Coffee House. He is a tall lad, aged about 20, thin, pale-coloured, squint-eyed, brown hair, pockpitted, ill-legged, in-kneed, and broad-footed.—The Right Hon. my lord Royston has issued warrants for apprehending the said Robert and his accomplices."

Even this lively description of Robin's legs, however, failed to find him. Nor did a £50 reward from Stewart of Appin. But James and Ronald, two of his brothers, were haled before the courts along with a local horseleech, accused of being his accomplices. But the evidence failed, and they came back with a verdict

* He had already assumed this name in compliment to the Perth family.

of Not Proven as their rather sinister halo, and cautioned in a sum of £200 to keep the peace for seven years.

Robin Oig vanished. But he had sundry adventures, for, unpromising recruit though he must have looked, he enlisted at some unknown date (though between 1740 and 1745) in the 42nd Regiment, better known as the Black Watch, was captured by the French at Fontenoy, spent some time in a French prison, was exchanged, and then discharged from His Majesty's service. He must have felt pretty sure that his old offence had been purged by these patriotic achievements (which were in marked contrast to those of his brothers, who had been out in the 'Forty-five), as he straightway returned to Balquhidder and settled down, apparently, as a peaceable inhabitant. He even married. But his wife died not long afterwards, and an unexpected path to confusion was thereby opened. For aggrandisement was ever a main concern with these MacGregors, and Robin Oig again became the tool of his kinsfolk. His brothers, especially the wily James, were determined that he should marry again, and marry money. His squint, his pockmarks, his knock-knees cannot have made him a very attractive suitor, but his brothers did the searching for him and discovered an attractive young widow of nineteen, Mrs. Jean Key, of the parish of Balfron on the Endrick Water (where, by the way, tradition tells that all the children of the village were in one winter's night devoured by wolves !). She had a fortune of some 17,000 merks Scots, and a yearly income of 600 or 700 merks besides : a useful addition to the Balquhidder exchequer. The first attempt to secure it was made peaceably enough; but the messenger sent to Mrs. Key's family on Robin's behalf was decisively rebuffed. Neither the widow nor her mother wished to have anything to do with the " Highland gentleman " who was said to be waiting in a neighbouring tavern to pay his call.

But a week later, on December 10, 1750, the hunt was resumed with a bigger pack. Between eight and nine at night there arrived at the house of Edenbelly the three brothers, James, Ronald, and Rob, with several followers from the Braes, all armed and ready for business. James took the lead and demanded for his brother the hand of Mistress Jean, declaring (quite falsely) that Glen Gyle, his chief, had a hundred men up on the moor ready to advance and support the suit at a moment's notice. Jean and her mother,

Mrs. Wright, still refused to have anything to do with the Gregalich; the men-folk of the house were kept back at the pistol-point, and in the darkness of the December night they bundled Jean across the saddle of one of the party and made off with her into the hills. They struck westward for Loch Lomond. There was a moment on the way when Robin Oig was touched by the protests and lamentations of his bride and told her she could go home again to Edenbelly, if she could find her way. But brother James stepped in, furious, damned him for a coward and rascal, and cried: "What! Will you let her away, when I have ventured my life and family to procure you a fortune?" During the night

NEAR LOCHEARNHEAD

they reached an inn over at Rowardennan, on Loch Lomond, kept by a MacGregor, and there spent the day of the 11th. On the 12th there appeared a small fair man "whom they called Smith, a priest," and this unconvincing gentleman, said to have come from Glasgow, pronounced some sort of marriage formula over the strange pair, Robin holding her right hand, and James propping her up by the waist.

After this began a restless month of wandering, the brothers trying at once to keep her out of reach of her kinsmen, and to get her to sign a deed in their favour which would enable them to lay hands on her property with a show of legality. They kept on the move. Glen Falloch saw them, and they stopped for a little

at Killin; then up Glen Dochart and down to Callander and back to Balquhidder, where Robin Oig formally declared her his wife in presence of the Kirk Session.

But the law, though it was a long stride to Balquhidder, stepped in, and a process was begun to secure her freedom, the integrity of her property, and the arrest of the offenders. The resolute James tried one more bluff. He brought poor Jean down to Edinburgh, although her health and reason were by now suffering from the strain, and actually got her to apply to the Court of Session to suspend these legal proceedings. But the bluff was called, and James fled back over the Highland line, leaving Jean in the capital. She died, poor creature, in October 1751, broken in body and mind. In the following summer James MacGregor was caught in the hills and brought down to Stirling, attired, according to an eye-witness, "in a soldier's great-coat, and riding on a horse, below whose belly his feet were tied." The jury found him guilty of the forcible abduction of Mrs. Key, but whilst sentence was pending he escaped from the Tolbooth in disguise and somehow got over to France. There he lived for a year or two on the bounty of Prince Charles, then tried without success to enter King George's secret service, and died penniless in 1754.

As for Robin Oig, "the gentleman from the Highlands," or, as his brothers called him, "the daft callant," he was apprehended at the fair of Gartmore in the spring of 1753, with his father's famous gun in his hands. A charge against him for that almost forgotten murder of John Maclaren collapsed for technical reasons, but on the charge relating to his "wife" he was sentenced to be hanged in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh. Which he duly was, "behaving with great decency and very genteelly dressed," on February 6th, 1754. His body was cut down after half-an-hour's swinging and handed over to his friends. They bore it off to the Highlands, being met at Linlithgow by a large number of his fellow-clansmen who had not cared to come quite so near the seat of justice as the Grassmarket. The coronach sounded for him, and with every sign of Highland mourning the corpse of Robin Oig was brought home to Balquhidder and there buried.

That was one of the last notable affairs of the kind in the Highlands, which by then were being more and more opened up to the influences of law and order. The grief of the MacGregors was

probably more than just sorrowing for "the daft callant," always so cocksure and so silly; they were mourning the passing of the old anarchy—the cramping of their style. . . .

. . . . . .

Rob Roy himself died peacefully up at Inverlochlaraig, which may be reached by the pleasant road that follows the northern shore of the loch. After the bridge below the Rhuveag falls at the foot of the Monachyle Glen, it reaches the small Loch Doine, joined to Loch Voil by a narrow and shallow channel with stepping-stones spanning it below the Monachyle farm. And Inverlochlaraig stands near the burnside a couple of miles further west. It looks down towards the lochs, and back to the steep slopes of Ben Tulachan and the flank of Stobinian; it is not hard to imagine how easily these lawless men could make this country their home. Of their peaceable activities up here, one may see the background in the inventory of Rob Roy's livestock property as delivered according to legal form by his redoubtable widow in February 1735: he possessed, it appears, "two tydie cows" (*i.e.* in calf) at eight pounds Scots per piece; "two yeald kine" (*i.e.* barren) estimated at six pounds Scots per piece; two old kine with a stirk, estimated at six pounds, thirteen shillings and fourpence Scots per piece; two "forrow kine" (*i.e.* not in calf); four other head of cattle; thirteen ewes and a ram; seven hogs; fourteen goats with one buck; eight "minchaks" (*i.e.* two-year-old she-goats); one old mare with a filly; two horses; one blind horse (estimated at only thirty shillings!); two bolls of grey corn with straw; twelve pounds' worth of hay; and some saddlery.—No great business!

Beyond here, the track ends. But we can take to the hill, and have a look at the eastern march of the county where it touches the head of Loch Katrine. Carrying up the burnside beyond Inverlochlaraig, we may strike up over the neck between the two hills straight ahead, or else bear over by the easier glen—with its reedy lochan at the foot of Stob a Choin—and come down after a fairly stiff three miles of heather and tussocky grass near Portnellan and the Black Isle on Loch Katrine. From here a newly built road is running along the side of the loch to the once remote fastness of Glen Gyle.

From Rob Roy's last home we have crossed the hills to his first. The hills on both sides drop steeply down, with a few

scattered woods to the northward, and enclose in a quiet solitude the narrow head of the curving loch, the strip of pasture land along the burn (which is itself the march of Perthshire and the

ON LOCH KATRINE

farthest tip of Stirling), and the old house of Glen Gyle. In the house that stood here before the present building (which dates from the early part of the eighteenth century), Rob Roy was born. The record of his entry to the world was found not many years ago in the parish registers of Buchanan, in these terms :

"On the 7 day of March, 1671, Donald M'Gregor in Glengyle, ps. [parish] of Calendar, upon testificat from ye minister yrof. Margaret Campbell. Son baptised, called Robert. Witnesses, Mr. Wm. Anderson, Minister, and John Macgregor."

And this country hereabouts was long associated with his name and exploits: five or six miles away, on the hills above Inversnaid, there still stand remains of the "Garrison," the stone fort built in 1713 to keep check on the outrages of him and his clansmen.

It was down here that Wordsworth and Coleridge wandered, a little off their proper track, in August 1804, as recorded by Dorothy in the *Recollections*. They had come over the hills from Inversnaid, with a good deal of difficulty, and had been misled as to the means of reaching the Trossachs.

"It was between five and six o'clock when we reached the brook side, when Coleridge and I stopped, and William went up toward the house, which was in a field where about half a dozen people were at work. He addressed himself to one who appeared like the master, and all drew near him, staring at William as nobody could have stared but out of sheer rudeness, except in such a lonely place. He . . . inquired about boats; there were no boats, and no lodging nearer than Callander, ten miles beyond the foot of the lake. A laugh was on every face when William said we were come to see the Trossachs; no doubt they thought we had better have stayed at our own homes. William endeavoured to make it appear not so very foolish, by informing them that it was a place much celebrated in England, though perhaps little thought of by them, and that we only differed from many of our countrymen in having come the wrong way in consequence of an erroneous direction."

But this overture of the solemn William's was met with a pleasing instance of the old Highland hospitality, the account of which is worth giving at length: for it makes a good picture of a Highland interior of the time, a vanished mode of life and vanished standards. Let us follow up Dorothy's account of her night in Glen Gyle:

"After a little time the gentleman said we should be accommodated with such beds as they had, and should be welcome to rest in their house if we pleased. William came back for Coleridge and me; the men all stood at the door to receive us, and now their

behaviour was perfectly courteous. We were conducted into the house by the same man who had conducted us hither on the other side of the lake, and afterwards we learned that he was the father of our hostess. He showed us into a room upstairs, begged we would sit at our ease, walk out, or do just as we pleased. It was a large square deal wainscoted room, the wainscot black with age, yet had never been painted: it did not look like an English room, and yet I do not know in what it differed, except that in England it is not common to see so large and well-built a room so ill-furnished: there were two or three large tables, and a few old chairs of different sorts, as if they had been picked up one did not know how, at sales, or had belonged to different rooms of the house ever since it was built. We sat perhaps three-quarters of an hour, and I was about to carry down our wet coffee and sugar and ask leave to boil it, when the mistress of the house entered, a tall fine-looking woman, neatly dressed in a dark-coloured gown, with a white handkerchief tied round her head; she spoke to us in a very pleasing manner, begging permission to make tea for us, an offer which we thankfully accepted. Encouraged by the sweetness of her manners, I went downstairs to dry my feet by the kitchen fire; she lent me a pair of stockings, and behaved to me with the utmost attention and kindness. She carried the tea-things into the room herself, leaving me to make tea, and set before us cheese and butter and barley cakes. These cakes are as thin as our oat-bread, but instead of being crisp, are soft and leathery, yet we, being hungry, and the butter delicious, ate them with great pleasure, but when the same bread was set before us afterwards we did not like it.

"After tea William and I walked out; we amused ourselves with watching the Highlanders at work; they went leisurely about everything, and whatever was to be done, all followed, old men, and young, and little children. We were driven into the house by a shower, which came on with the evening darkness, and the people leaving their work paused at the same time. I was pleased to see them a while after sitting round a blazing fire in the kitchen, father and son-in-law, master and man, and the mother with her little child on her knee. When I had been there before tea I had observed what a contrast there was between the mistress and her kitchen; she did not differ in appearance from an English country lady; but her kitchen, roof, walls, and floor of mud, was all black alike; yet now, with the light of a bright fire upon so many happy countenances, the whole room made a pretty sight.

"We heard the company talking and laughing long after we were in bed; indeed I believe they never work till they are tired. The children could not speak a word of English: they were very

shy at first; but after I had caressed the eldest and given her a red leather purse, with which she was delighted, she took hold of my hand and hung about me, changing her sidelong looks for pretty smiles. Her mother lamented they were so far from school, they should be obliged to send the children down into the Lowlands to be taught reading and English. Callander, the nearest town, was twenty miles from them, and it was only a small place: they had their groceries from Glasgow. She said that at Callander was their nearest church, but sometimes 'got a preaching at the Garrison.' . . . Mrs. Macfarlane attended me to my room; she said she hoped I should be able to sleep upon blankets, and said they were 'fresh from the fauld.'"

LOCH ACHRAY

The next day the Wordsworths saw and heard more of the sequestered, unspoilt life of these people of the hills. They all had breakfast together.

"The cheese was set out, as before, with plenty of butter and barley cakes, and fresh-baked oaten cakes, which, no doubt, were made for us; they had been kneaded with cream, and were excellent. All the party pressed us to eat, and were very jocose about the necessity of helping out their coarse bread with butter, and they themselves ate almost as much butter as bread. In talking of the French and the present times, their language was what most people would call Jacobinical. They spoke much of the oppressions

endured by the Highlanders further up, of the absolute impossibility of their living in any comfort, and of the cruelty of laying so many restraints on emigration. Then they spoke with animation of the attachment of the clans to their lairds: 'the laird of this place, Glen Gyle, where we live, could have commanded so many men who would have followed him to the death; and now there are none left.' . . . Speaking of another neighbouring laird, they said he had gone like the rest of them to Edinburgh, left his lands and his own people, spending his money where it brought him not any esteem, so that he was of no value either at home or abroad. We mentioned Rob Roy, and the eyes of all glistened. . . . He was a famous swordsman. Having an arm much longer than other men, he had a greater command with his sword. As a proof of the length of his arm, they told us that he could garter his tartan stockings below the knee without stooping, and added a dozen different stories of single combats which he had fought, all in perfect good-humour, merely to prove his prowess. . . . [Mrs. Macfarlane] said she would show me what curious feathers they had in their country, and brought out a bunch carefully wrapped up in paper. On my asking what bird they came from, 'Oh!' she replied, 'it is a great beast.' We conjectured it was an eagle, and from her description of its ways, and the manner of destroying it, we knew it was so. She begged me to accept of some of the feathers, telling me that some ladies wore them in their heads. I was much pleased with the gift, which I shall preserve in memory of her kindness and simplicity of manners, and the Highland solitude where she lived. We took leave of the family with regret: they were handsome, healthy, and happy-looking people. . . ."

Glen Gyle House nowadays is in closer touch with Glasgow than it was in the hospitable Mrs. Macfarlane's time. For it belongs —as the somewhat obtrusive arms in the porch display—to the corporation of the City of Glasgow, who acquired it in connection with their use of Loch Katrine as a water reservoir. The headquarters of the Water Board are over at Stronachlachar, and not far from there an aqueduct brings down an additional supply from Loch Arklet. The great conduits which lead the water off from the loch start from a point about two miles further down the shore. The level of Loch Katrine has been artificially raised on several occasions since Glasgow began to draw her water from here in the middle of last century—and there is some ground for

criticism of the way in which the beauties of the neighbourhood have been sacrificed to economies of material and time. "Let Glasgow Flourish" by all means—but it has flourished well enough to be able to afford ways and means of carrying out its necessary works without unnecessary eyesores. The raising of the water-level, of course, meant inevitably the disappearance of the once-famous "Silver Strand" at the foot of Ben A'an (the Water Works Act of 1885 solemnly included a clause binding the Board to do whatever was possible to help the loch water to re-form the Silver

IN THE TROSSACHS

Strand!), and also diminished the size of Ellen's Isle hard by. These were necessary sacrifices, it may be, but gashes of concrete are ugly reminders to leave amongst the hills and the bends of the loch.

Not far from the old house, sheltered by trees and an ivy-covered wall, lies the burial-ground of the MacGregors of Glen Gyle. Dorothy Wordsworth walked over to it with her hostess on the morning of her departure—"a dismal spot, containing four or five graves overgrown with long grass, nettles, and brambles"—and noted that some English verses were inscribed on one marble tablet against one wall, commemorating one of the Glen

Gyle lairds, "purporting that he had been the father of his clan, a brave and good man." The Macfarlanes spoke of him "with veneration." He was, in point of fact, the nephew of Rob Roy, Gregor MacGregor of Glen Gyle (also known as Gregor Glun Dhubh), who died here in 1777 at the age of eighty-eight. He came out on the Jacobite side in 1745, and gave the Hanoverian troops some trouble in the neighbourhood of Crieff, being also posted at the strategic point of Doune Castle. The solemn formality of the commemorative verses over his grave is not without effectiveness :

> "Not with vain flattery to insult the dead
> We place this stone above thy honour'd head,
> But that, while wand'ring here, the good and brave
> May sighing pause to mark thy silent grave,
> And awful, o'er thine ashes as they bend,
> Think on their Chief, their father and their friend,
> Speak of thy steady soul and martial flame,
> That burnt for Truth and Virtue more than Fame,
> And tell their sons to hold thy memory dear,
> Thy footsteps follow and thy name revere."
>
> . . . . . .

The county march runs from here down the middle of the loch to a point opposite the little pier at Stronachlachar; but Loch Katrine, as regards nine-tenths of its area, belongs to Perthshire. It is the largest of the group of lochs which give this corner of the county its unique variety and have made it one of the best-known, though yet the wildest, parts of the country. Loch Vennachar and Loch Lubnaig, and Loch Achray—the heart of the Trossachs proper—make a wonderful series; and Loch Chon and Loch Ard to the southward reproduce their characteristic beauties on a smaller scale.

But these are parts which many pens have painted and praised before now—and plenty more will come undismayed to the task. When Dorothy Wordsworth came to Callander, there fell into her hands a descriptive pamphlet by the minister of the parish (probably Dr. Robertson's) in which she found six closely printed pages depicting the beauties of the Trossachs, and then concluding with the words : "In a word, the Trossachs beggar all description." And she wisely agreed with him. It has been said that attention was first drawn to the district by the parish minister's description in the *Statistical Account* of 1791 ; but, as everyone knows, it was not

until Scott published *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810 that Loch Katrine and the Trossachs had the full literary limelight turned upon their lonely shores and rocks and trees. For my own part, I would counsel the traveller to take *The Lady of the Lake* for granted, and look at the scenes that lie before him through his own eyes. He will see it all the better for not being bothered with Sir Walter's eloquence, and he would do better to watch the living and actual beauty of the place, summer or winter, than think overmuch of Fitz-James or Roderick. It is always a pity when a place of great natural beauty tends to become a sort of "museum piece." And let it be frankly said that the Trossachs, of recent years, have come increasingly into the dangerous orbit of the advertising writers of railway and motor-coach interests—who does not know

ELLEN'S ISLE, LOCH KATRINE—LATE AUTUMN

their curious gasping ecstasies, their breathless dots and dashes of eager admiration, their honey-sweet invocations of Romance and Charm and Loveliness? In the height of the "tourist season" (a sinister phrase in itself) one is aware of a certain smear of exploited admiration.

Indeed, the Scottish Highlands in general have for some years now been standing in danger of too much organised attention of the wrong kind. Let those who live there beware of letting their country become what the said advertising writers love to term a "British Switzerland." A "tourist traffic" is never in itself a healthy development, economic or spiritual, for any country. Every tartan-and-white-heather "souvenir" shop in city or country in Scotland should be a warning. It may point to the day when, either in the world-famed Trossachs or the world-famed somewhere else, the Highland scene of the advertisers' taste will be found carefully prepared for their clients' expectant eyes, and,

without extra charge, the passing motor-juggernauts may behold alongside their charted routes authentically shaggy Highland cattle tended by authentic Highlanders in full Highland dress, possibly with pipers in attendance, and at every village shop the

BRIDGE ON THE ACHRAY

admiring tourist will be able to buy freshly cut white heather (grown in the garden), or large Scotch thistles made of a non-prickly indiarubber. Beware! Beware the awful edelweiss of Lucerne—the conscientiously patched and baggy trousers of Marken—the grinding funicular—the trim and tidy *Aussichts-punkt*. . . . No country can live on anything but its inherent vitality. Picturesqueness is a perilous stock-in-trade. And what the Highlands need is not the elaboration of " tourist facilities," but the proper development of their natural resources for the benefit of their own people.

. . . . . .

But these sombre reflections are perhaps ungracious in the context of the road we are following. The " bristly " gorge of the Trossachs proper opens on to the almost enclosed basin at the eastern end of Loch Katrine, where the small steamer pier

stands, and through it runs the winding road to the edge of the calm, sheltered waters of Loch Achray. In summer, when most people see this part, the trees dominate everything; winter or, better, the first quickening of spring, to my mind shows such country at its best, where there is such subtle variety of colour in the earth, bare of its cumbering bracken, the glint of the outcropping rocks, the faintly tinted tips of the buds on the hazels. But September, or early October, lays astounding sheets of hammered gold across the trees of the pass, until, often almost in a couple of nights, it breaks up, leaving only scattered sherds here and there, and the long austerity of winter begins.

At the point where the road reaches the western end of Loch Achray, there turns off at a sharp angle a road forbidden to all motor vehicles—the " toll road " to Aberfoyle, and hard enough going for the horses that cross that way. The steep zig-zagging descent into Aberfoyle should not be hurried over (safety apart !), for it gives fine views out across Loch Ard and the eastern flanks of Ben Lomond.

But back at Achray, the little hamlet beside the Achray Water (where one is again reminded of the need of far-away Glasgow for water), there runs the track through the old Pass that took its name

TROSSACHS CHURCH AND BEN VENUE

from the loch before the present road along the foot of Ben A'an. Bealach-nam-Bo it is called, the Pass of the Cattle, and the cattle are generally supposed to be those that the MacGregor gentry (and others too, it may well be) drove northward after their raids

into the south country. And certainly, after getting your booty through the narrow gash of the pass, you would feel secure enough with the wall of Ben Venue between you and the distant grazers of the Stirling flats.

The Trossachs Hotel, many-pinnacled, is of course the sanctified spot for the luncheons and teas of the summer-time streams of visitors; and beyond that, between the road and the water's edge, stands the pleasant little Trossachs church, with its pointed belfry over its slender windows—and then we gradually emerge towards the opening of Glen Finglas and the Brig o' Turk at its foot.

BRIG O' TURK, GLEN FINGLAS

Here we are on the bank of Loch Vennachar, with Ben Ledi looking down on it as it looks down on Loch Lubnaig to the northward—and all along here the student of Scott may have *The Lady of the Lake* continually in hand. The country is less wild, along both banks of the loch, the contours softer, the land more green. On the flat meadow-land of Lanrick, a mile or so east of the Turk Water's mouth, may be identified the meeting-place of Clan Alpin as described in Scott's poem; and at the other end of Loch Vennachar, where the Teith runs out (in thrall to the water-sluices of Glasgow), is the ford that takes its name from the farm of Coilantogle, above the Callander road, where Roderick Dhu met Fitz-James in combat. Further on a little and one reaches

LOCH VENNACHAR

"Bochastle's Heath," and one should not pass without recalling the remarkable prehistoric fort that stands on the top of a steep bluff on the rising ground above the road, and from which (Dun-bochaistil) the place takes its name. It probably owes its place to the commanding view southward that it has. Then, crossing first the railway and then the Leny emerging from its Pass, one reaches the pleasant outskirts of Callander.

Callander is one of the natural gateways into the Highlands, now no less than in the days when practicable passes were very few. To the east there was Balmaha, on Loch Lomond; to the west, Killiecrankie; and in the centre, the Pass of Leny with Callander as its sentinel. The town is set very agreeably on the wooded bank of the Teith, just below the confluence of the Leny, and behind it rises the bold, jutting height of the Callander Craig, steep and thickly planted. Westward, however, rises the splendid outline of mountain that dominates the place—Ben Ledi, the Hill of God. It is not a hill of great height, rising only to 2875 feet; but its shape and setting, rising so deliberately from the glen below, make it a curiously impressive landmark over all this fringe of the Grampians. The climb is easy, if taken by the Coilantogle footpath, and if conditions are favourable one may see not only a wonderful range of the Grampian peaks, but a southward view so wide as to embrace the Firth of Forth and the veiled haunches of Arthur's Seat, and the hills of Arran beyond the Firth of Clyde.

Behind Callander, on the other hand, rises the wild, sturdy side of Uam Var, at the foot of which runs the beautiful small glen of the Keltie Water, with its rocky gorge and the waterfall of Bracklinn. And there is a good track for the walker running up by Luirgean and over the ridge of Meall Odhar to the head of Glen Artney.

The Pass of Leny is short and narrow, shared by road, rail and river, a tumbling of rocks, a crowding of trees. The Leny dashes itself headlong through its gorge; even in summer, with low water and muffling trees, there is plenty of noise, but in spring, with the water running high and the bareness of the branches, the voice of the Leny is a formidable one. It pours from the narrow tip of Loch Lubnaig, which parts road from rail, the former following the eastern, the latter the western, bank of the long, curving loch. The road passes close to the ruins of the chapel of St. Bride,

and follows the edge of the loch through two or three miles of larch and birch. And abreast of Ben Ledi now, we can see to no less advantage the bare majesty of its shape rising from the loch.

Half-way up the loch stands the house of Ardchullarie, remembered as the residence for a time of James Bruce, the discoverer of the source of the Blue Nile and explorer of Abyssinia; here he wrote a good part of that famous book of travels, published in 1790, which roused at once a storm of controversy and all the temperamental furies of its author. Time has justified much of Bruce's case; he deserves a pause of kindly recollection in the passing.

Strathyre is the narrow valley running down to the head of Loch Lubnaig, with the Balvaig burn winding through its haughs. The village that takes its name from the strath has a gentle charm of its own, straggling along the roadside with its gardens and porches, at the foot of the steep green ridge that divides this from Glen Ample. The "warm strath," this valley is called in the Gaelic; and the name expresses its kindliness well enough.

Two or three miles and we are back where the hills fall back towards Balquhidder. Then Lochearnhead—and we have come full circle.

BRIDGEND, PERTH

II

The Braes of Doune.—Pistols and sporrans.—Doune Castle.—"The Bonnie Earl of Moray."—John Home's escape.—Blair Drummond.—Lord Kames and his Water-wheel.—A colonising experiment.—Dunblane Cathedral.—Tombs and a mystery.—Sheriffmuir, 1715.—Rob Roy, neutral.—The Roman camp at Ardoch.—Archaeology and malefactors.—A military road.

A GENTLE country opens out wide and wider as the Teith flows gently in its south-easterly course, heading for its meeting with the Forth at the corner of the county, a green carse-land, beyond which the Braes of Doune slope gently back, the foothills of the Grampians. Up there lies the oddly-shaped Loch Mahaick,

DOUNE

fed by many burns and making one, the Ardoch, which flows down a tortuous course of its own through woods and meadow-land, past the pleasant castle of Kilbride, which dates in part from the fifteenth century, and at the foot of Doune Castle itself.

The village of Doune is a quiet place, although a centre of many roads, and long famed for its cattle-fairs. The bridge that leads the Stirling road across the Teith, here flowing pretty swiftly, dates from as far back as 1535 by Robert Spittel—a scion of the Buchanans of that ilk—who was tailor to King James IV and his queen. His benefaction, it is said, was long distrusted by the conservative inhabitants of the district, who compared it

unfavourably to the old bridge at Callander, and the rhyme was handed down :

> " The new brig o' Doune, and the auld brig o' Callander,
> Four-and-twenty bows [arches] in the auld brig o' Callander."

QUEEN MARY'S ROOM—DOUNE CASTLE

About the middle of the seventeenth century Doune developed a lively trade in pistols, founded by one Thomas Cadell, a maker of reputed skill. They sold at prices varying from four to twenty-four guineas a pair during the eighteenth century; and they were

worth it, for surviving specimens of the Doune pistols show them to have been things of fine workmanship, beautifully chased, and with remarkable variety in design of butt, cocking-piece and trigger. Sporrans too from Doune were held in high repute.

But the Castle is Doune's chief interest nowadays. It is a ruin, but it is still one of the finest examples of the Scottish Baronial style in its purest form. It is magnificently placed, on the steep grassy peninsula between the Teith and its tributary, the Ardoch burn. The massive square tower rises a full eighty feet above its gateway, and this is balanced at the opposite corner of the Castle's quadrangle by a corresponding tower about half the size; rounded turrets crown the corners and summit of the wall; and inside there is still extant a variety of winding stairways, corridors, deep vaults that will satisfy the zeal of any antiquary.

The Castle as it now stands was built, on the site probably of earlier strongholds, by Robert, Duke of Albany and Earl of Menteith, and his son Murdoch, who succeeded him in the year 1419. Robert was the son of King Robert II, and he was succeeded in the post of government by Murdoch, who was, however, apprehended on a charge of treason four years later. Tried at Stirling, he was judged guilty, and was put to death on the Castle Hill there—looking across the level lands, the story goes, to the great tower that represented his forfeit greatness. The Castle was then seized by the Crown, and James IV made a gift of it to his queen Margaret, daughter of Henry VII of England, on his marriage in 1503. When she later married Lord Methven, the office of constable of Doune Castle became hereditary in her family; and from this arose its association with the Earls of Moray, whose eldest sons bear the title of Doune. And everyone knows the reference to it in the tragic ballad of "The Bonnie Earl of Moray," and his death at the hands of the Earl of Huntley at Donibristle Castle in 1592:

"He was a braw gallant,
And he played at the glove;
And the bonny Earl o' Moray,
O, he was the Queen's love.

"O lang will his ladie
Look ower the Castle Doune,
Ere she see the Earl o' Moray
Come sounding through the toun."

The Castle underwent a siege in the stormy days of Queen Mary's troubles and the regency of the Earl of Lennox. But its last days of turmoil were in the 'Forty-five, when Prince Charles's men used the pile as a prison, MacGregor of Glen Gyle being placed in charge of it. Into its inhospitable vaults were thrust a goodly

DOUNE CASTLE

number of prisoners taken from General Hawley at Falkirk in January 1746. Amongst them was a young man named John Home, then some twenty-three years old, who had volunteered for active service along with a number of other students from Edinburgh University, and was destined later to be famous as the author of the tragedy of *Douglas*. Home set his imagination to

DOUNE CASTLE

work in the cold gloom of Doune's stone-walled chambers, and plotted an escape with five companions by the time-honoured but dangerous device of knotted blankets.

"Four persons, with Home himself," said Scott, "reached the ground in safety; but the rope broke with the fifth, who was a tall, lusty man. The sixth was Thomas Barrow, a brave young Englishman, a particular friend of Home's. Determined to take the risk . . . Barrow committed himself to the broken rope, slid down on it as far as it could assist him, and then let himself drop. His friends beneath succeeded in breaking his fall; nevertheless, he dislocated his ankle, and had several of his ribs broken. His companions, however, were able to bear him off in safety." They escaped by way of Tullieallan to Queensferry and thence to Edinburgh. But an old gentleman told Scott (who stayed on several occasions at Cambusmore, near Callander) that he remembered seeing the commander Stewart of Balloch "riding furiously through the county in search of the fugitives."

But these were the last eventful days of Doune Castle. It fell gradually into disrepair; but fortunately its preservation has been well guarded, and it stands out as one of the most notable antiquities of its kind in Perthshire, or indeed in all Scotland.

. . . . . .

Southward of Doune, on the other bank of the Teith, lies the fine estate of Blair Drummond, a place of some interest and worth pausing at. It lies in the midst of well-wooded, friendly policies; and to the south of the Stirling road there stretches the long tract of Blair Drummond Moss, which extends eastward to within a mile or so of the Forth just before its junction with the Teith.

In Roman times there must have been dense forest here, as also at Kincardine Moss, but through here the legionaries drove the road that led up from Stirling by the Allan Valley to the important camp and base at Ardoch—and thence into the basin of the Tay. But Blair Drummond Moss itself recalls a curious and attractive figure of eighteenth-century Scotland, a man of learning and enterprise, who deserved well of scholarship and whose engineering ideas bore useful fruit that we can still see to-day.

I mean Henry Home, Lord Kames. It would be tempting to write at length of this curiously individual character, one of that salty and pithy group of Scottish judges who made the Court of

Session in Edinburgh a centre of interesting ideas and attractive society during the middle years of that century. But here we can meet him only as a benefactor of Perthshire; for he enlarged its useful territory in a way that attracted a good deal of attention in his day, although it is not too often recalled in our own time. Lord Kames was sprung of a Border family—the village from which he took his title is in Berwickshire—but through his wife, Agatha Drummond, he succeeded to the valuable estates of Blair Drummond in 1766, at the age of seventy. He was still active on the Bench, where his strong language stung advocates, suitors and fellow-judges alike into startled awe, and still busy with his eager but inaccurate pen upon historical and philosophic disquisitions of the most varied kind; but he had ceaseless vitality, and he turned his attention to a large scheme of land reclamation here in very difficult circumstances.

Soaking peat-moss and heather stretched over all the carse-land (as it now is) between Stirling and the head of the Goodie Water, a tract that was dangerous to livestock, with countless pools, and spreading its morass wastefully over a width of a mile and more. A few feet below this surface, in some places quite twelve feet below, lay good alluvial soil, of a fine clay; and it was Kames's plan to lay this bare. He began almost as soon as he could. And for the next sixteen years of his life, he shared his time between the Bench and the Moss, faithful to both until within a very few days of his death at the close of 1782. His heir, George Home Drummond, completed what he had begun, and the first *Statistical Account* gave a full record of methods and progress up to the date of its appearance in 1791. It is not without interest—or without practical value as a reminder to landowners that there are possibilities even in the most quaggy of peat-mosses.

Nearly fifteen hundred acres of the whole waste area lay with the Blair Drummond marches, roughly an eighth of the whole, and Lord Kames's predecessors had been fairly successful in clearing a strip of about three hundred acres of shallow peat before 1766. For the main portion, however, Kames decided that water-power must be used, even although the land lay almost dead-level and the peat could not be expected to travel seawards down a slope. Accordingly, he cut a fairly straight channel right across his square of the moss from north to south; it seems to have worked out at a

gradient of 1 in 300, and it led a mill-stream formerly used on the estate right across the moss to the Forth at a point near Meiklewood. The new stream thus formed could carry off peat at a slow but steady pace; a score of men stationed at intervals of a hundred yards pitched the sods into this canal; and the first work was done on this elementary principle. Kames's colony of settlers—they must have been almost lake-dwellers at first—was gathered together by the offer of farming land at terms which were tempting to men of patient and stubborn hopefulness. They were mockingly called "the moss-lairds," and a good deal of local jealousy was at first directed against these Highland settlers who came down to inhabit this promised, but hidden, land. It was a pioneer's life. They took a "tack" of thirty-eight years, of ten-acre plots, and paid no rent until the eighth year; the estate provided timber for the tenant to build a house and eight bushels of oatmeal to feed him while he built. Meanwhile he pitched the peat, and did what else he could.

By 1768 two tenants were definitely settled, and the scheme moved forward with decided success until, in 1774, thirteen families were on the moss, with 104 acres between them. The houses were dug out of the solid peat, when exposed and dry, and then roofed with the laird's timber.

Then work began with another tract and another channel, more difficult of access and much deeper to dig into. But by 1782 there were twenty-nine "moss-lairds" and over 330 acres of good land exposed.

Lord Kames's heir conquered another twelve hundred acres, summoning the Teith to his aid by means of a large water-wheel erected by Meikle of Alloa in 1787 at what is now the Mill of Torr, on the Stirling–Doune road. It turned patiently and continuously for fifty-two years, from 1787 to 1839, raising the water seventeen feet, and made possible the salvation of nearly 1500 acres in all. Thirty years after the work had first started, amidst much scepticism and crabbing, the Drummonds could count on their new-found-land 764 inhabitants, in 102 houses, with 54 horses and 201 cows amongst them.

There was a very individual character about this colony. Coming from north of the Highland Line, chiefly from the Braes of Balquhidder, they were strangers in the land hereabouts. They

kept their own tongue and their own dress—and something of their own lawlessness too, for illicit distilling was one of the subsidiary branches of their agriculture. In 1793 a schoolmaster was appointed, with the duties of local minister as well, at the salary of £15 a year, all told. But gradually, of course, the old barriers broke down and intercourse with the community became general.*

. . . . . .

But now, retracing our steps to Doune, we should strike over through the level agricultural land towards Dunblane. (Bridge

DUNBLANE

of Allan, near by, would be pleasant to linger in—but the county march holds us back from it by a hundred yards or so !) Here, we are on the banks of the easy-going Allan Water, and behind Dunblane rise the bare foothills of the Ochils. And when, in the sixth century of our era, St. Blane settled here, by the hillock beside what is now the cathedral, he chose a pleasant spot on the banks of a pleasant stream.

The town itself has little distinction, but the cathedral is one of the few notable ecclesiastical buildings left to Scotland by the

* A similar tale could be told of the great Flanders Moss further west, where, in the early part of last century, the Blair Drummond example was followed by the Erskines of Cardross, in the parish of Port of Menteith.

DUNBLANE CATHEDRAL, FROM THE ALLAN

rancours of her Reformers. The sparseness of noble architecture in Scotland—and I use the word "noble" advisedly—has perhaps led to some patriotic overpraise of this building, as of others; and the enthusiasm of John Ruskin over its west window, so characteristic of his imaginative eloquence, reads less critically convincing to-day than it did sixty or seventy years ago.—"Do you recollect the west window of your own Dunblane Abbey? It is acknowledged to be beautiful by the most careless observer. And why beautiful? Simply because in the great contours it has the form of a forest leaf, and because in its decoration it has nothing but forest leaves. He was no common man who designed that Cathedral of Dunblane. I know nothing so perfect in its simplicity and so beautiful so far as it reaches, in all the Gothic with which I am acquainted. And just in proportion to his power of mind, that man was content to work under Nature's teaching, and instead of putting a merely formal dog-tooth, as everybody else did at the time, he went down to the woody bank of the sweet river beneath the rocks on which he was building, and he took up a few of the fallen leaves that lay by it, and he set them in his arch side by side for ever." The nave and choir have both been extensively restored within the last forty years. The vitality of Gothic and the cold deliberation of Calvinism make difficult neighbours in the soul of a building, but nevertheless the Cathedral of Dunblane is not a place to pass by unvisited.

Its foundation is placed in the middle of the twelfth century, when a bishopric was set up here in the reign of David I, "the sair sanct for the crown." The church as it now exists, however, dates principally from the bishopric of Clement, between 1230 and 1260. Up to the time of the Reformation Dunblane had twenty-five bishops, one of whom was Maurice, the abbot of Inchaffrey, who was chaplain to Robert Bruce at Bannockburn and was rewarded with the see. Of the Protestant bishops the most notable was the conciliatory Robert Leighton, who ruled this diocese between 1661 and 1670, when he became Archbishop of Glasgow. He left his library to the cathedral, and it formed the nucleus of a small collection preserved by trustees in the building marked with the episcopal mitre close to the churchyard gates.

The square tower, not improved by its candle-snuffer on top, rises to about one hundred and thirty feet, and seems to have

been raised at different periods. It is set in a place rather inappropriate to its style.

The effigied tomb of Michael Ochiltree, and that of Malise, a thirteenth-century Earl of Strathearn, are inside the church; and near the former may be seen some carved stalls of old black oak, certainly dating from before the Reformation. Beneath the nave lies the vault of a turbulent race, the Stirlings of Keir (whose seat, now in other hands, is a pleasant place some three miles south of

BRIDGE OVER THE ALLAN, DUNBLANE

Dunblane, near the ford across the Teith); a Stirling of Keir was gravely suspect of having been the man disguised as a priest who murdered King James III in Beaton's Mill after the fight at Sauchilburn—and another was the leader of the band who mutilated Meldrum of Cleish under the very walls of Holyrood. But the most interesting grave within the cathedral is that in the choir, marking with its blue marble slabs the resting-place of Margaret Drummond and her two sisters, laid here in mysterious haste in the year 1501. This is not the place to go into the tangled problem of whether the beautiful Lady Margaret, daughter of the founders

of the house of Perth, was wife or mistress of James IV. There was at any rate a surreptitious connection, and there was a child born. And when it became essential that a match should be made for the King with the daughter of Henry VII of England, there was a fatal meal at Drummond Castle, following which all three daughters died, after a painful sickness of a few hours; and there was a hurried burial at Dunblane, and plenty of dark suspicions. It is a tragic grave.

. . . . . .

ON THE ROAD TO SHERIFFMUIR

But turning away from the cathedral, and the Allan Water purling over its weir below its walls, we should turn eastward, past the wooded grounds of the hydropathic (that moribund word has still an odd persistence in Scotland, north and south !), and strike up the hill to cross a battlefield of some renown.

Along the Ochil foothills to the east of Dunblane lies the Sheriffmuir, a long sloping tract of grassy moorland crossed by a road that cuts over towards Blackford. The name comes from the fact that the old " wapinschaws " required by the sheriffs took place on this wide space, conveniently situated for a fairly populous district. But it is familiar, of course, by virtue of the battle that

took place here at the end of 1715, the last time that armed forces clashed on the soil of the county—for although Perthshire was an important factor in the 'Forty-five, there was no blood spilt within her marches. And a notoriously indecisive and unsatisfactory engagement it was, though Jacobites and Royalists between them left fully a thousand dead on the moor; and the bare rolling slope still keeps something of the melancholy that rises from an old battlefield.

What happened? The battle, of course, was quite accurately summarised in the famous verse attributed to McLennan, the minister of Crathie:

"Some say that we wan,
Some say that they wan,
An some say that nane wan at a', man!
But o' ane thing I'm sure,
That on Sheriffmuir
A battle there was that I saw, man,
And we ran and they ran,
And they ran and we ran,
And we ran and they ran awa', man!"

Which, of course, is just about as much as any single fighting man sees and understands of a battle of any magnitude. But from the best accounts a few facts do emerge pretty clearly.

The Earl of Mar had probably about 9000 Highlanders under the Jacobite standard when he left Perth in the second week of November and struck southward across Strathearn for Stirling. He had been slow in bringing himself to start, and paid for it: for the Duke of Argyll, camped with distinctly inferior forces at Stirling, had plenty of time to get news of the advance, and was able to cross the Forth and take up a good defensive position commanding the routes from the north. From Dunblane itself, where General Whetham commanded the left flank of his force of about 3600, the defenders were strung out up as far as the near edge of the moor. There they waited, and the Highland army reached the barrier after the early dusk on November 13th. Both sides were on the alert until morning broke—the old local tradition being that Mar's clansmen whetted their weapons at the gathering-stone up beyond the Dykedale farm. (It lies protected now by a grating with ribs arching like a skeleton's.)

The clash came early next day. Both sides struck hard with

their right; Mar, down by Dunblane, struck through Whetham's defence like a north wind, and pursued him like a very Rupert right down the banks of the Allan Water to Stirling. But at the same time, Argyll found the weak spots in the Jacobites' left, and turning in on them, drove them down the crooked little glen of the Wharry Burn, with considerable loss. But this had taken longer to do, and Mar had had time to return to the scene from

THE GATHERING STONE ON SHERIFFMUIR—NOVEMBER

Stirling, thus being able to threaten the so-far-victorious Argyll from the south-west. Both leaders seem to have been disconcerted, and the forces edged away from each other until contact was impossible in the advancing winter afternoon. If Mar had shown as much dash then as he had in the early morning, he might well have reaped the fruits of the decided victory on his right wing (the more important one); but he did not hold his ground, but moved cautiously up the Allan towards Ardoch, while the Duke came

down again into Dunblane. In result, then, after all the running of "us" and "them," the Royalists could count the effective victory theirs; for they still stood barring the way to the south, and Mar had withdrawn his Highlanders back on their tracks. And certainly that rough, scrambling strategy on the moor and on the Wharry Burn meant the end of the Jacobite hopes for another thirty years.

One man—according to a story often told regarding the fight at Sheriffmuir—might have saved the hopes of the Old Pretender, for a time at least; and that was none other than the famous Rob Roy. With the caution, perhaps, of an experienced hill-fighter, he waited with a goodly troop of MacGregors and watched the confused course of the action in a kind of sympathetic neutrality. Mar appealed to him to throw in his weight on his side, but Rob Roy only answered that if this fighting could not be won without him, it could not be won with him—and withdrew his forces intact, safe for other and doubtless more lucrative warring.

. . . . . .

From up here, on the slope of Glentye Hill, one may look over the quiet green stretch of Strathallan. The railway, heading for Perth, follows the valley alongside the singularly sudden twists and loops of the Allan, flowing swift but steady between its regular, grassy banks. The wide brown expanses of the uplands opposite sometimes, in the rainy weather, flash glimpses of their little hill-burns across; and beyond lie the high hills, beyond Strathearn, and up by Glen Artney. After this, we feel, the Highlands will close us in; and Caledonia must indeed have seemed stern and difficult country when the legionaries of Rome made their way up this stretch, halted, laid their plans, and dug their great camp down there at Ardoch on the bank of the Knaik Water.

From Greenloaning we may strike up the long straight mile, or more, to Braco. And just beyond this village, to the east of the Crieff road, lies one of the most notable relics of the Roman occupation in Scotland or in England—the great military station of Ardoch. (To visit it, by the way, is not a right; but local enquiry will inform the traveller regarding this.)

The arrow-straight road from Dunblane to Greenloaning may already have reminded one that the roads from Rome stretched far into distant lands. But Ardoch is an even surer reminder.

The road crosses the Knaik Water at the further end of the village of Braco, and Ardoch House stands in its wooded grounds a little eastward of the village. And just beyond the bridge—where there are remains of a seventeenth-century bridge also—lies the great fort of the legionaries. Very few remains of fortified places in this country have preserved their outline so well; the main outlines, except in so far as they have been cut away in the western edge by the roadway, stand out in unmistakable clearness. The waters of the Knaik run some fifty feet below the main level,

ROMAN CAMP AT ARDOCH

giving sure protection to the west; on the north and east sides runs a series of five deep entrenchments, the cast-up earth of which forms a series of stout ridges about twenty feet apart. Both on the north and east sides the entrances are clearly visible, where a level roadway must have come in across the *fossae*. The southward fortifications are less clearly defined, and have apparently suffered some damage in the course of time; but there were at least two ditches on that side.

All this encloses an oblong area, the station within these entrenchments, covering about five acres of ground. The innermost rampart was shown by the excavations of 1897 to rest on a layer of

large stones, seven feet in width; it rises at places almost eighteen feet above the level of the bottom of the inner fosse. There is a ledge between this ditch and the base of the parapet about seven feet wide. A notable feature of the outer system is the exceptional breadth of the flat-topped ridge between the second and third ditches; it is at one point fifteen feet across, and the conjecture is probably sound that this was designed to give a good stance for an advance body of men, probably armed with the javelin, in the defence of the fort.

Of the inner buildings of the station few traces have survived; their stones have probably long been incorporated in dykes and house-walls in and about Braco. But excavation did show two stone courses, just below the surface, of a long narrow building in the north-east quarter of the inner area; this was no doubt a *centuria* or barrack building, of which there must originally have been several alongside each other. And traces have also been found of various wooden buildings—as also of a small fourteenth-century stone chapel erected on the site and long mistaken for a Roman *praetorium*.

The earliest mention of this interesting place is to be found in a letter of Lord Drummond to a kinsman in the year 1672, in which he wrote:

"The leaguer of the Romans for one whole winter lay at Ardoch . . . and there is to be sein ther entrenchments and fortifications in circular lines, deepir in som places than that a man on horseback can be sein; and north-east from that ther are more trenches, alyke in form and largeness; but the ground being much better, has made the people, against my grandfather's order, take them doune in som places. Ther was near these a round open[ing], lyke the mouth of a narrow well, into which my grandfather ordered a malefactor to go, who (glad of the opportunity to escape hanging) went and brought up a spur and buckler of brasse, which were lost the time that a garrison of Oliver's dispossessed us of Drummond. Ther was found a stone ther, upon which was cut an inscription to show that a captain of the Spanish Legion died ther. If you please, I shall coppie it for you. It is rudly cut."

That is interesting, not only for its hint of how condemned criminals may be made useful in the cause of archæology, but also

for its mention of the inscribed stone now preserved in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow. This monument bears the following words :

DIS MANIBVS
AMMONIVS : DA
MIONIS COH
I HISPANORVM
STIPENDIORVM
XXVII HEREDES
F . C

It is thus seen to commemorate one Ammonius, son of Damio, who served (probably) for twenty-seven years in the first cohort of the Spanish auxiliaries, and whose heirs erected this stone.

This round opening, by the way, into which the malefactor descended, is no longer known. The *Statistical Account* of 1837 mentions it—declaring that the said criminal perished from foul air at a second descent—and says that "a gentleman who lived at the House of Ardoch, anno 1720, ordered the mouth of the hole to be covered with a millstone, to prevent hares running into it when pursued by his dogs; but as there was earth to a considerable depth laid over the millstone, it cannot now be found, although diligent search has been made for it." All this is probably connected with an old local belief that a tunnel ran from the fort to the small circular fort on Grinnan Hill, a grassy mound near the village, and that untold treasure lay hid therein. A rhyme thereanent has been preserved :

"From the Camp of Ardoch
To Grinnan Hill of Keir
Are nine kings' rents
For seven hundred year."

North of this permanent station of Ardoch lie remains, very scanty, however, of much larger camps of a temporary nature. One of these has been estimated to enclose over 120 acres, the other about 60 acres. Between them, these camps were capable of accommodating fully 35,000 men.

The parish of Muthill, in which we now are, has other Roman remains, which ought to be mentioned in passing. A Roman road ran north-north-east from Ardoch across the Muir of Orchill—it is just discernible here and there, where the plough has not

touched its line—and at Kaims there was a small fort with a low oblong rampart; it was excavated, without much being found, in 1900. And near the Mains of Strageath, about a mile from the railway bridge over the Earn, is the site of another and larger fort, from which a military road ran eastward down the strath to an outpost not far from Dupplin Loch. It can still be traced as a straight track running across the fields behind Innerpeffray Castle, until it merges with the modern road just north of Trinity Gask and Gask House. In the early years of the eighteenth century it was described by the antiquarian Robert Sibbald as "the Roman *via militaris*, called by the common people the *Street Way*. This in some places is raised above the ground almost a man's height, and is so broad that one coach may pass by another with ease upon it, and this runneth towards the river Tay." It could hardly be described as so conspicuous to-day, but it is still a noteworthy relic of the Imperial power.

The stretch of road in question, about seven miles long, is marked by a series of small outposts, visible now as ditched circles about twelve or fourteen yards in diameter; seven are known, but there were probably more originally. Excavation showed that these must have enclosed small wooden towers, or some kind of raised wooden building. The most notable of these is one lying in a ferny beech-clump to the north-west of Gask House, much overgrown, and long known as the "Witches' Knowe." About a hundred years ago, according to the *Statistical Account*, "a number of human bones were dug up, all entire, particularly two skulls," a discovery which was held to support the local tradition that it was a burning-place of witches; and there was also found "a small urn of coarse workmanship, which would contain about three English pints." The excavations of the Society of Antiquaries in 1900, however, found no remains except of the actual ditches and central post-holes.

However, this Roman excursus is taking us far afield; and to follow it eastward to Carpow, near Abernethy, or westward to Dalginross, where the Ruchill Water meets the Earn, would take us farther still. At both places there are signs of the whole length of Strathearn having been a significant line of Roman defence. But let these be left to the experts.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARIES

III

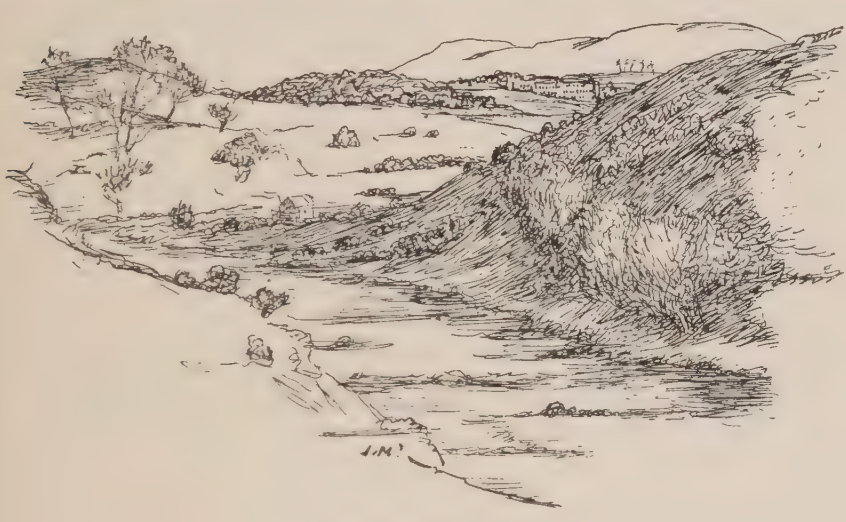
Carsebreck.—The curling-pond.—Blackford and Tullibardine.—Back into the Ochils.—Snow on the Ochils.—Up Glen Devon.—Down Glen Eagles.—Haldanes of Glen Eagles.—Auchterarder, the Burning Money, the Disruption of 1843.—The Dunning miller.—Forteviot.—'Fortren' of the Picts.—Dupplin Moor.—Invermay, David Mallet, and Robert Burns.—A new village.—Bridge of Earn.—Pitkeathly.—Moncreiffe Hill.—*Ecce Tiberim!*—The Carse of Gowrie.—Millais at Kinfauns.—Castle Huntly.

TO take our glimpse of Ardoch, we left the meandering banks of Allan Water down at Greenloaning. It is time to return there, and bear up the other road, towards Blackford and Glen Eagles.

The stream here runs in a straighter course, and two or three miles up from its meeting with the Knaik, it passes close underneath an irregularly shaped pond; grassy slopes run down to it, and a small burn feeds it at the farthest corner. Except perhaps for a week or two in the year's round, all is quiet here; only the day-by-day business of the farm overlooking it, and the passing trains along the neighbouring line, disturb its inconspicuous calm. But that week or two—nay, even that day or two sometimes—is a wondrous awakening! For this is Carsebreck—and to the great fraternity of curlers, Carsebreck is very much what the Old Course of the Royal and Ancient is to the golfer.

Here, if you come on the right days of winter—and they are not too frequent and can never be dated by printed calendar—you will see the admirable sport of curling at its best. The place is alive with the native, authentic spirit of the game. The glass vaults of city rinks may offer admirable consistencies of ice and temperature; and on the more spectacular rinks of Switzerland you may see a more studious devotion to tailoring and haberdashery. But the game is not at its best in exported forms, and the spectacle of a bonspiel at Carsebreck has nothing of exploitation in it.

The spot is well chosen for the meeting-place of many curlers in their perennial rivalry. The pond is none too large for the considerable numbers that are nowadays within reach when the weather is hard enough for the holding of a bonspiel. But it freezes well: a northerly wind blows very 'snell' across the Muir of Orchill and Tullibardine Woods, and the Ochils ward off the thawing fingers of a wind from seaward. And it is central; there is a 'halt,' too, on the railway close to Carsebreck where the local trains can drop the pilgrims with only a short walk across the hard fields to the pond. In summer it may seem a superfluous stop, that; but see it even once on a crisp, sunny January morning



ON THE ALLAN

when the ice is bearing, and clean maybe for a week's curling nearly, and you will not at any season let Carsebreck flash by your train-window and not lay down your newspaper to watch it. . . .

The game begins early (part of the zest of curling comes, I think, from your constant awareness that you have no time to lose, for it is a sport with no calendar, playable only at the will of the incalculable elements), and it goes on until the last possible moment of the quick-falling dusk of these winter afternoons, with as short a break as possible for the hot drinks and cheese sandwiches of midday; and then the pond will be left for the night in quiet again, to await, if the frost is holding, the next morning's sound of the 'cramps' again rattling on to the ice, the swish of

the brooms clearing off the driven snow or the splintered ice, the sharp scraping of the iron bars that cut the circles round the 'jacks'—and one more roaring morning will be beginning. . . . But it is a melancholy afternoon—and the sense of there being no time to lose is heightened tenfold—when the stones begin to throw up splashes of water as they run their course; the wind is freshening, and shifting south-eastward; the slates on the farm-roofs are beginning to look damp and streaky, and the growing mildness of the air gradually drives out the exhilaration that made you utterly forgetful of any cold. To-morrow forenoon, at this rate, the ice will be unplayable, cracks darting across it like lengthened pistol-shots, and soon Carsebreck—like many humbler

BEN LEDI FROM STRATHALLAN

rinks up and down the glens—will be once more a solitude of reeds, ducks, and the dull, winter-weary fish. . . . But console yourself, if you are wise, by an afternoon in front of the fire with a volume of the Royal Caledonian Club's year-book: it holds many comforts.

. . . . . .

On the other side of the road the gentle Braes of Ogilvy slope back to Kinpauch and Craigentaggart in the solitudes of the Ochils. And at their foot lies the strung-out village of Blackford, where the Perth road crosses the railway; local brewing here has an old ancestry, for the Court treasurer's accounts for the year 1488 record that when James IV was returning by this way from his coronation at Scone, a sum of twelve shillings was paid "for

a barrel of ayll at the Blackfurd." The fragmentary remains of the mediæval Ogilvy Castle indicate a place of considerable strength.

The great expanse of Tullibardine Wood, not so unbroken as once it was, stretches across the rising, windswept ground to the northward. The village of Tullibardine itself—which has long lent its name to the eldest sons of the Dukes of Atholl, once its earls—has a small chapel which served once as the burial-place of that family, but has since passed into other hands.

But here we should turn for a little, before leaving them behind, into the Ochil Hills, or at least into that part of the range which lies within the Perthshire boundaries.

The Ochils are a foretaste of the greater hills to the north; and to those who live within sight of them to the southward, a measure of the waxing and waning seasons. The first snow sprinkled on their caps in the fall of the year is their reminder that winter is on her way from the north; the vanishing of the last drifts, and the coming of the fresh soft green on their bare sides, are an earnest of spring. Their poet, James Logie Robertson, who wrote under the name of "Hugh Haliburton," knew all the moods of these hillsides that rise up from Strathallan and Tillicoultry, and in a short poem called "The White Invasion" he caught well the spirit of those fierce October evenings when a galloping north wind whitens the Ochils with fair warning of winter being hard on its heels:

"The sun gaed down in fire and gloom,
The winds o' winter woke,
And sent frail autumn to his doom
An' Scotland to the yoke!

"That nicht they stormed the Grampian posts,
They scoored the Rannoch wolds;
Nae fortress could defy their hosts,
They seized the Hieland holds.

"What slaughter through the nicht we heard
On Ochil hill an' lea,
Blent with the moan of driven bird
An' storm-o'ertaken tree!

"The wark was dune ere morning broke
Upon the waltering Forth;
And Dalmahoy's twin lions look
Blanch-faced at the north!"

. . . . . .

The county march between Perthshire, Clackmannan and Kinross zig-zags in a rather unaccountable way through the heart of the Ochils. It leaves Bencleuch, and some of the other high points of that steep and lonely range, within the bounds of Clackmannan; but Perthshire can claim a goodly share in the interest and beauty of the hills. The Ochils nowhere touch the three thousand-feet mark, but they rise, particularly towards the west, from a bare fifty or sixty feet above sea-level, and one can enter their recesses quickly from the gentler levels down by Alva or Tillicoultry, and be wrapt very suddenly in the all-enveloping sense of height and remoteness. Green and kindly in summer, they form a stark, forbidding wall in the bare season of the year;

STRATHALLAN AND THE OCHILS

but their contours are almost always smoother and more welcoming than those of the Grampians—though far sterner than the mild slopes of the Sidlaws.

The main road that traverses the Ochil Hills runs entirely across our county, from Rumbling Bridge up Glen Devon and down the long straight cleft of Glen Eagles to the railway junction on the Stirling–Perth line.

It is a pleasant entry to the county, and one that is more used now than it used to be. Striking up from North Queensferry and Dunfermline, the road will bring you easily up towards Crieff and the inner heart of the Grampians. And there is great variety in it. The green fertility of the country round the Rumbling Bridge and the Crook o' Devon hardly prepares you for the sudden solitude

that lies beyond the Yetts of Muckart. The church of Glen Devon, on the opposite bank from the "big house" of the glen, is the heart of this peaceful parish; for although the road, in summer time at any rate, is busy, the houses are few and far between, and the hills on either hand are crossed only by sheep-tracks. Half a mile further on, Glen Sherup runs down into the main glen; its lively burn comes down from one of the three hill-lochs up there which were formed about the middle of last century and dutifully supply water for Dunfermline and other centres in Fife. And then the road climbs more steeply to the summit of the pass, where, at Glenhead, it turns northward into the straight descent of Glen Eagles.

Glen Eagles is a name which the advertising of interested parties has made familiar to people all over Britain; the travel agencies of America have also made good play with it; and to golfers, of course, it is one of the major shrines. It was deftly chosen for its purpose. "Glen Eagles!"—the sound has the full-blooded, romantic, Walter Scott quality that appeals to the foreigner whom it is desired to attract. There is a suggestion of rugged grandeur, soaring peaks, clansmen, targes, whatnot. . . . And I know that more than one Southron has been surprised by the trimness of the spacious railway-station, the admirable sweep of motor-road, the gentle undulations of fenced pasture that lead him to the famous hotel over under Tullibardine Wood. . . .

But the name has nothing to do with eagles. It signifies no more than the glen of the church (*eaglais* in the Gaelic), with reference to the twelfth-century chapel of St. Mungo, on the head-waters of the narrow Ruthven Water which has its source a couple of miles up the glen, west of the road. A mile further down stands Glen Eagles House, a handsome place which dates, in its main portions, from the early part of the seventeenth century, and was built to replace the now-ruined Castle further down towards the railway. The name of the Haldane family, of course, has been associated with these estates for seven unbroken centuries; and their intimate connection with the district was strengthened by Lord Haldane making his home at Cloan—or Cloanden as it was formerly styled—near Auchterarder.

But passing here we have left the Ochils behind us again, and

are once more facing the broader champaign of upper Strathearn. And there is only time to make passing mention of the other road that runs north from the Yetts of Muckart. After crossing the Devon it climbs steadily under the splendid turf-clad slopes of Lendrick and Mellock, both of them over the county border of Kinross, and is over the thousand-feet mark beside the bridge over the head-waters of the Water of May. The road is even lonelier than the Glen Devon way—and a hard one when snow is on the hills—but it drops quickly and easily by the Balquhandy Burn into Dunning.

Of Auchterarder, mentioned a moment ago, there is not much to tell. Its name, meaning the "upper high land," describes its position, straggling along the ridge of an inconspicuous hill just north of the Ruthven Water. A long street, emphatically grey and grim, is all that the casual traveller sees of it; but it is locally an important centre for farmers and shepherds, and it has an old history. There is mention of the town as far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century, although it probably lay then a little further to the north than the present centre of the town.

During the rising of 1715 Auchterarder, with its neighbour, Blackford, was under a luckless star; for both of these villages were burnt down by order of the Earl of Mar, after the fight at Sheriffmuir, in order to hamper the possible advance, after that inconclusive action, of Argyll's forces. The Pretender issued a declaration regarding this from Scone in the following January, setting forth that the burning had been "absolutely necessary for our service and the public safety . . . to prevent the far greater inconveniences and hardships which must have ensued to our subjects, had our clemency and tenderness prevailed upon us to preserve those places," and bidding the inhabitants prepare statements of claim for what they had severally lost. The proffered indemnities, it appears, were never paid by the short-lived court at Scone; but from the loyal side certain payments were later received, known as "the burning money," and from these a new village soon arose. Apart from this, the main incident in Auchterarder's recorded history is the famous dispute as to ecclesiastical patronage and the powers of the veto, which broke out in 1834

and led directly to the Disruption of the Church of Scotland nine years later. The breach thus opened in the Presbyterian body has been but lately closed, and Auchterarder was not one of the few parishes that stood out against the reunion; but the episode will long be associated in Scottish history with this town, which still seems to reflect, in its outward form, something of the dour, uncompromising spirit that fought out its preliminary skirmish of Church and State three generations ago.

The next village, Dunning, suffered in the same way during Mar's retirement on Perth. All the houses save one, ran the local story, were destroyed, and that one was the house of a canny miller who, seeing what dangerous work was afoot, set fire to some damp straw in his kitchen and so let the destroyers think that their work was well in hand there as elsewhere.

Three miles or so further on this road, and we reach a small village with a long history behind it, a place too of very pleasing aspect. Forteviot lies pleasantly on the right bank of the peaceful Water of May, not far from its junction with the Earn; the parish, however, is a large one and runs far into the Ochils, up beyond Struie to the county boundary. The village is a quiet, modest spot, and the more so for being a little off the main road. But thirteen centuries ago it was a place of more importance, if not perhaps of much more size; for it is generally identified with the Fortren of the Pictish kingdom, the seat of the principal Pictish chief—and therefore the capital of the kingdom. Later records give Fother-tabaicht as the place of royal residence, and this, with other historical pointers, is a clear indication of the antiquity of the place. The remains of a fortified place near the farm of Jackshairs, on the road between Dunning and Forgandenny, may well be those of Dun-fother, besieged towards the end of the seventh century. The Pictish dominion, however, was sorely tried by the attacks of Norsemen and Scots, and Fother is presumed to have finally fallen when the hapless Drust, last of the Pictish princes, fell fighting, here or at Scone.

Kenneth Macalpin, however, restored the fortunes of the united Picts and Scots against the Norse invaders, and it was at the old Pictish capital that he died in the year 860, and from there his body

was taken for burial in Iona. In Andrew de Wyntoun's rude lines we read how—

" At Fortewyot his lyff tuk end :
Till Ikolmkill than wes he send.
Thare enteryed yhit he lies
Under epitaphe on his wyis :

" *Primus in Albania fertur regnasse Kynedus,*
Filius Alpini, proelia multa gerens,
Expulsis Pictis regnaverat octo bis annis,
Et post Fortevyot mortuus ille fuit."

And the same chronicler records an episode concerning Forteviot which had momentous consequences in early Scottish history; for it was here that King Duncan I (the grandson of Malcolm II, and the same who, in 1040, was murdered by Macbeth) came hunting, was separated from his retinue, and sought shelter at dusk at the miller's house in Forteviot. The miller's daughter caught the royal fancy, and it was not long before the king

" Tuk and chesyd that woman
To be fra then his luwyd leman,"

and before much longer a son was born to them, who succeeded his father—his bastardy no bar—as Malcolm III, better known as Malcolm Canmore. Now, orthodox historians have rejected Wyntoun's account of this great king's origins; but Wyntoun must have had some reason for this account of them, and Forteviot ought not to abandon its tradition in the matter without a struggle.

History touches on Forteviot at a good many points up to the time of the Bruce, and the old palace must have been a place of some importance, even after royalty had left it for south of the Forth. A carved archstone, representing mainly armed figures, and rescued from the bed of the May, is now preserved in Edinburgh, believed to be the sole surviving relic. The site has been plausibly conjectured as being on a low hill beside the stream; but the vagaries of the Water of May have been frequent and, in all probability, undermined it.

Across the slow-moving Earn, on the fields round the farm of Bankfoot, was fought the battle known to history as Dupplin Moor, where, in the late summer of 1332, Edward Baliol and his followers, mainly the " disinherited lords," inflicted a damaging defeat on the Earl of Mar, who lately, at Perth, had been elected

Warden of Scotland during the infant king's minority. Baliol had marched his men from Kinghorn through the Ochils, by way of Struie, and had taken up a position at Forteviot almost before Mar, who certainly under-estimated the strength of the few malcontents who were going to oppose him, had fully mustered his thirty thousand men at Perth. But in Baliol's rear, the Earl of March had been advancing from the south, and now lay near Auchterarder, while Mar camped before him on the sloping ground across the Earn. He was in an awkward place. But during the night, while Mar's men, according to Wyntoun,

> ". . . sent to Perth for wyn and ale,
> And drank and playd and made na tale
> Off thare fays [foes] that lay tham by
> That seemyd to be stad straitly,"

Baliol, guided, it is said, by a Murray of Tullibardine, brought his men over a ford further up the stream, near Inverdunning, and struck hard before the dawn. From the high ground above Mar's camp, Baliol's men rushed down, and a bloody *mêlée* began in the darkness, which left the defending force so bewildered that even the coming of daylight did not allow them to recover their discipline. Mar himself was slain on the Moor, and Baliol chased the majority of the survivors right back to within sight of the gates of Perth. March was too late in leaving Auchterarder for his advance to be of any avail in the fight, and when he reached Dupplin there was little he could do but gaze in horror on the piled-up dead—three thousand, say the chroniclers. But even if they doubled their figures, there must have been blood in plenty in the Earn that day. Baliol had struck his first blow for the crown in no uncertain way.

A mile or so upstream from the village, in finely wooded policies, stands the house of Invermay, a solid eighteenth-century mansion with two curious rounded bays and a pediment that would be better if it were bolder. This is an estate with an old history, appearing first in a Papal grant to the priory of St. Andrews about 1185. From the middle of the thirteenth century until 1625 it was held by the Stewarts of Innermeath (as the name then stood) and Lorn. Grahams and Drummonds owned it thereafter, until it was sold in 1717 to Alexander Belsches, Sheriff Clerk of Edinburgh, whose descendants were lairds of Invermay for over

a century and a half. Close to the house stand the creeper-clad remains of the old Tower, the Drummond arms over its door, dated 1633—although the Tower itself must be considerably older.

Time was when Invermay, or " Endermay " as one of its variant names was, enjoyed much fame for its birch trees. The old refrain of " The Birks of Endermay " was very popular, and at one time, in the summer season of 1771, was the success of the day at the Haymarket Theatre in London. But by then it had been set into a somewhat artificial form by a young student from Crieff, David Mallet, whose version, later touched up by Allan Ramsay, began thus—

" The smiling morn, the breathing spring,
Invite the tuneful birds to sing,
And while they warble from each spray,
Love melts the universal lay.
Let us, *Amanda*, timely wise,
Like them improve the hour that flies;
And in soft raptures waste the day
Among the shades of Endermay.

" For soon the winter of the year,
And Age, life's winter, will appear;
At this thy living bloom will fade,
As that will nip the vernal shade.
Pure taste of pleasure then is o'er,
The feathered roosters are no more;
And when they droop and we decay—
Adieu the shades of Endermay ! "

Burns dined in the house during his Highland tour in 1787; his diary for September 15th notes:

" Leave Perth—came to Endermay to dine—fine fruitful cultivated strath . . . fine scenery on the banks of the May—Mrs. Belsches gawcie, frank, affable, fond of rural sports, &c. . . ."

The glen of the Water of May, close to the mansion-house, is indeed a place of great beauty, a mile and a half of romantic, wooded gorges, not soon to be forgotten.

But it would be wrong to leave Forteviot without mention of the fine example it sets to the small villages of Scotland in the matter of planning and architecture. For until a few years ago the place was one of the dull, grey, haphazard, straggling, featureless groups of houses that only too often are all that Scotland can show as a village. This has disappeared—as hundreds might

with advantage—and in its place, thanks to the enterprise of the proprietor, Lord Forteviot, and the judicious skill of the architect, there has risen a very pleasing and practicable example of village-planning which deserves to be widely known. The dwelling-houses have been set round three sides of an open grassy square, two-storey cottages with attractive porches and well-proportioned gables, the brown tiles giving a congenial warmth after the usual dull slate of Scottish roofs, and the soft white of the harled walls giving a refreshing brightness. On the other side of the road alongside which the square is set, stands an agreeable village hall, equipped as such a place should be. The whole scheme is exactly what is needed to give many a village a proper sense of corporate life; would that all proprietors were in a position to undertake similar works of imagination! An oblong tablet over the archway in the central gable fittingly commemorates the change, and links it with the past of the village: "*This village was rebuilt by John Alexander, First Baron Forteviot of Dupplin, in the years* 1925–1926, *and occupies part of the site of the ancient capital of Forthuir-Tabaicht, a royal residence from the VIIth to the XIIth centuries. Here Kenneth Ist* (*Macalpin*) *died* A.D. 860."

. . . . . .

Lord Forteviot's seat, Dupplin Castle, stands overlooking the broad strath on the other side of the Earn, and behind it stretch some remarkably fine woods. The present castle was built between 1828 and 1832 by the Earl of Kinnoul, on the site of the old building which was burnt down in the autumn of 1827. Soon after passing the Dupplin policies, the Earn, which has frequently altered its channel hereabouts during the past two centuries, begins to wind this way and that in a remarkable series of "links" until it reaches the famous Bridge of Earn, where it is crossed by the main north road from Queensferry and Loch Leven. The last fragments of the arches of the old bridge disappeared, after heavy spates, not many years ago. Two of these arches were still surviving when the painter Millais made use of them in 1857 for the background of his picture "Sir Isumbras at the Ford."

Bridge of Earn lies in a rich stretch of agricultural country, and has some repute as a resort. The mineral springs at Pitkeathly (or Pitcaithly), a mile or so west of the village, are still in use. There are actually five wells, the waters of which vary

slightly in strength; they have been worked on a modernised commercial basis since 1911, but there remains a certain charm about the small harled building, with its stone shaft and white chimneys, and the little symbolic statue rising from the grass.

SITE OF OLD BRIDGE OF EARN

Their properties as saline waters have long been known; the local traditions allege that they were first noticed because of the way in which pigeons continually resorted to them—though some say that harvesters from the surrounding fields were their true discoverers; and certainly as far back as 1711 they were popular, because the kirk-session records of Dunbarney, in which they lie, contain an entry to this effect: "Session . . . took into consideration the profanation of the Sabbath by people frequenting the medicine well of Pitkeathly, whereupon some of the elders were desired to visit the well every Sabbath morning, and dehort the people from coming to it on the Lord's Day, and inquire what parishes they belong to, that word may be sent to their respective ministers to discharge them; and John Vallance is forbidden to

give them passage at Dunberny boat, and Thomas Drummond desired to spread the report that they are to be stopped by constables, by authority of the justices of the peace." But what these elders would exclaim could they see the traffic crossing the Bridge of Earn on other unecclesiastical errands on a fine Sunday morning two centuries later—who shall tell?

And here there rises before us, a mile to the north, the wooded hump of Moncreiffe Hill.

It rises a little over seven hundred feet above the level of the green haughs alongside the Tay, and Thomas Pennant's description of the view from its summit can still be read without many modifications being called for. "The prospect from thence," he said, "is the glory of Scotland, and well merits the eulogia given it for the variety and richness of its views. On the south and west

ON THE TAY—BELOW PERTH

appear Straithern, embellished with the seats of Lord Kinnoul, Lord Rollo, and of several other gentlemen, the Carse, or rich plain, of Gowrie, Stormont Hills, and the hill of Kinnoul, whose vast cliff is remarkable for its beautiful pebbles. The meanders of the Ern, which winds more than any river I at this time had seen, are most enlivening additions to the scene. The last turn it takes forms a fine peninsula prettily planted, and just beyond it

joins the Tay, whose œstuary lies full in view, the sea closing the prospect on this side. To the north lies the town of Perth, with a view of part of its magnificent bridge; which, with the fine woods called Perth-Parks, the vast plain of Straith-Tay, the winding of that noble river, its islands, and the grand boundary formed by the distant highlands, finish this matchless scene." And he

THE TAY BELOW PERTH

goes on to quote the famous "tradition" of the Roman legionaries who, on coming in sight of the Tay, loudly exclaimed, "Behold the Tiber!" Well, perhaps they did: but, as Scott pointed out in a neat verse,* it was a poor compliment to the Tay —unless both Tay and Tiber have greatly altered since the days of Agricola.

Moncreiffe has given its name to a well-known Perthshire family; and it is odd to find the name so far afield as the roll of the French Academy—for Augustin-Paradis de Moncrif, the fabulist and historian of cats who died in 1770, sprang from this same stock.

The Tay, across the low, level fields beyond here, widens rapidly towards its Firth; the river, of course, is tidal, and small

* "Behold the Tiber! the vain Roman cried,
Viewing the ample Tay from Baiglie's side;
But where's the Scot that would the vaunt repay
And hail the puny Tiber for the Tay?"

The incident, as a matter of fact, seems to have been the invention, not unpleasing, of a seventeenth-century poetaster.

craft can make their way without difficulty up this open water. Not far from the southern bank, in a clump of trees, rises the notable ruin of Elcho Castle, a place of great strength, which has been well preserved (though long uninhabited) by reason of its having been soundly roofed in the early part of the nineteenth century. The date of the castle as it now stands can probably be placed in the early sixteenth century; but the site is far older, and there is mention of its having been a stopping-place for Wallace and his forces in the attempt on Perth in 1296.

. . . . . .

Across the Tay here, and we set foot on the Carse of Gowrie, the finest belt of Perthshire's agricultural land, running down between the Firth of Tay and the Sidlaws. Even to the unskilled eye the land along here has a look of richness; and to the farmers

MONCREIFFE HILL

of steep, stubborn, stony fields up in the Grampian glens you will often find "the Cairse" spoken of in a tone of true, but slightly envious, reverence. As well they may; for not only is the rich alluvial land itself among the best in Scotland, but the standard of the Carse's farming is befittingly high. The full stack-yards can speak for themselves; the trees and hedges seldom have that wind-swept leaning that the upland farms know so well; and there is a pleasant sense of kindliness and security in this checker-board of grain and fruit alongside the ever-widening Tay.

From Elcho, on the other bank, we were looking across to Kinfauns, where the Carse of Gowrie begins. Time was when the castle of Kinfauns exercised a powerful jurisdiction over the river here, and a local tradition maintains that this was acknowledged by all vessels passing up or down the Tay saluting or lowering their colours to the castle tower. The present castle is modern, lying among the wooded hollows between the two roads that run east and west through the Carse. But it harbours at least one relic of antiquity in the gigantic sword, five feet nine inches long, reputed by an old family tradition to have been wielded by Wallace's prisoner and companion, Thomas de Longueville or

SCENE OF MILLAIS' "CHILL OCTOBER": ON THE TAY, KINFAUNS

Charteris, who received the lands of Kinfauns from Robert Bruce after the taking of Perth in 1313.

The railway station here, down near the edge of the river, is close to a scene which, in the last century especially, was familiar to many thousands who never set eyes on Tay or Kinfauns. For it was here that Millais painted one of his best-known works, "Chill October," the first of his Perthshire landscapes. Turning his back on the railway station, the artist was looking across the sedges towards the wide reaches of the Tay; the whole picture was painted from nature, on the spot. No easy task, it turned out: a note by the painter on the back of his canvas commented—"Danger on either side—the tide, which once carried away my platform, and the trains, which threatened to blow my work into

PERTH FROM MONCREIFFE ISLAND

the river." There was a railway porter at the station who used to help the artist to place his paraphernalia in position every day, and Millais was amused to hear how this worthy used always to refer to the painting as " the picture we made doon by the watter-side." " Mr. Mullus," he always called him, and once asked a friend of the artist whether it were true that " Mr. Mullus had got a thoosan pound for yon picture."—" Quite true," he was told.—" A verra funny thing," answered the porter, " but I wudna hae gien hauf a croon for it masel ! " *

Half-way down the Carse rises the bold square church-tower of Errol; and three miles further on, near straggling Longforgan, Castle Huntly lifts its fine coronet of turrets high above the trees and the level land below its precipitous rock. Its present outward shape is largely the creation—a very successful one—of a proprietor into whose hands it came in 1777; but the original structure incorporated in this dates back to the early fifteenth century. It was originally built by the second Baron Gray of Foulis, who married a daughter of the Earl of Huntly and named it in her honour. In 1615 it was bought by the Earl of Strathmore, and fifty years later became known as Castle Lyon, until the original name was restored with the rebuilding. The fine, bluish stone of the castle came from the old quarries of Kingoodie, nearer the banks of the Firth.

And there we touch the county march again; Angus and the outskirts of Dundee are not far away; and with the wind out of the east there comes almost the tang of the open sea into our inland county.

* Mr. McGhie writes that " in the course of the fifty-seven years since the picture was painted, the thin straggle of willows has grown up into a great bank of trees, some new ones have sprung up; and what is more changeable than rushes and the bed of a tidal river ? "

THE TAY BELOW KINFAUNS

IV

Crieff.—The Burning in 1716.—Mrs. Caw's compensation.—The Gallow Hill.—Kate. M'Niven the Witch.—The Sma' Glen.—Ossian's Grave.—Amulree.—Up Glen Cochill.—Strath Bran.—The "Hermitage."—Robert Heron's description and Wordsworth's distress.

CRIEFF is a pleasant, unpretentious town, lying sunnily on the slope of its hill, with the Earn, here joined by the lively Turret Water, running amongst its trees at the foot. Behind it, from the slope above Bridgend, you see the wooded knob of the Knock of Crieff, a good nine hundred feet, and, beyond, the farther ridges of the hills over by Glen Almond. The town itself has a few antiquities to attract the attention of its visitors—a set of old stocks, the red sandstone mercat cross, the standing stones with cup-and-ring markings on the golf course: they are the relics of a past that, on the whole, was a stormy one.

As the chief town of Strathearn, placed in a position rather too vulnerable for cateran raids from the Highland glens that open out on to the broad, fertile vale of the Earn, Crieff in the old days had often to fear the news of armed men on the move in the hills behind. The caterans, it is said, used to say of Crieff that "she would be a braw toun gin she had anither singeing"—that she would be all the better of another burning! And she had plenty. In the cruel month of January, 1716, the Pretender signed an order at Scone for the burning of the towns of Auchterarder, Blackford, Dunning, and Muthill, in order to obstruct the advance of the Royal forces that were heading for Perth. Six weeks before, a good part of the Highland army that had marched north from Sheriffmuir had encamped at Crieff, demolished the south arch of the bridge across the Earn, and filled the peaceable town of decent weavers with their wild, ragged rank-and-file. And although Crieff was not apparently covered by James's order from Scone, it shared the fate of Auchterarder and the rest. On January 28th, the centre of the town, round the Town Hall, was set alight and

most of its houses, notably the leading inn of the place, were destroyed. Thomas Caw's inn was a place of some importance in those days—the biggest of its kind for many a long mile—and there were long preserved in his family some interesting papers relating to the damage done on that night. The goodwife, Mrs. Marion Caw, put in her claim for compensation in some detail: part of it reads—

	£	s.	d.
Item, 2 lairge chists a bead furnished, a press and a bink amrie .	26	0	0
Item, A lairge Bibell, 2 chairs and armed chair and pan. . .	7	10	0
Item, A pair shits 2 pair of bead plaids a dubel plaid a goold ring 2 hokes	25	0	0
Item, A tub, a dison & ½ of spoons, 5 pleats, 5 winchies, 2 bots, 7 bottals	6	0	0
Item, 3 pair Kardes, a chopin stop, a pint stop, a little ghill and mikoll, 2 canabatos, 2 broas chandleis	12	0	0
Item, A weight amand, 2 grot skopts a caf bead	3	0	0

What some of these things were, and how much she actually recovered from the Jacobite exchequer, we may sympathetically wonder. . . .

Thirty years later, the same danger threatened Crieff's hard-working prosperity, when Prince Charles arrived in the town in 1746. But luckily the Duke of Perth intervened on the townsmen's behalf, and the destruction was averted.

Something, perhaps, of the Highlanders' malignant attitude towards the Strathearn town was due to the memory of the famous "Kind Gallows of Crieff." A powerful number of clansmen had swung there, and such memories die hard. The hill on which they stood is still called the Gallow Hill, a small eminence not far from the present railway-station. Justice in the palmy days of that gibbet was administered by the Stewards of Strathearn, an office which for many generations was vested in the family of Drummond—and in fact remained so until the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions in 1748. Tradition points to a spot in a field close to the Broich, on the haugh-lands between the railway and the river, as the site of the old court of justice administered by the Stewards, although about 1665 a tollbooth was built for this and allied public business in the town itself. Why these gallows were known as "kind" is something of a mystery still: Scott has a note on the question in *Waverley*. But busy gallows they certainly were, and a terror to the wild men from further north.

On the south-east of the Knock stands Ferntower, of local fame as the residence of General Baird, whose monument we shall see out on Tomachastle. Up here, it is said, Sir John Cope encamped his troops during the 'Forty-five. The views down Strathearn from hereabouts need no printed commendation.

But there is pleasant country up behind the Knock to be glanced at before we go further afield.

. . . . . .

The golfer sees the Shaggie Burn where it runs into the Turret Water; to follow it would lead you through the woods of Monzie Castle, at the edge of which the Keltie joins it with a rush, and a little way above the Castle policies lies the quiet little village of Monzie, some distance below the main road that goes from Gilmerton up towards the Sma' Glen. In the old days this was the home of the M'Aras, who were formidable foes of the raiders coming southward this way; but its name was later to become maleficently famous in Strathearn by reason of the luckless Kate M'Niven, the "Witch of Monzie." About the year 1715 this old woman lived in a small but-and-ben on the right bank of the Shaggie, down from the Manse, and at certain times had employment as a nurse at the house of Inchbrackie, a few miles to the south-east. The laird of Inchbrackie was one of the first to have experience of Kate's unholy powers, as evidenced in the following peculiar way. Riding over one day on business to Dunning, the laird took with him (as was our fathers' wont) his silver fork and knife. While seated at dinner there, he was annoyed by the persistent buzzing of a bumble-bee; over and over again the creature pestered him, until at last, out of temper, he flung down knife and fork and beat the creature off. It flew buzzing out of the window; but when the laird got back to his chair, lo! knife and fork were gone! On his return to Inchbrackie he told his odd story, and very soon afterwards the missing articles were found in the possession of the sinister Kate M'Niven.

With such a tale against her, the witchcraft fever was not long in spreading, and plenty of other equally mysterious incidents were brought up. Early in 1715 she was apprehended, tried, and condemned to be burnt. Her execution took place on the Knock, at a place which has the traditional name of Kate M'Niven's Crag, and was accompanied (it is alleged) by the scenes usual to these

events. She let out a parting malediction on the lairds of Monzie, that their line should never have a lineal successor, and on the parish minister, a Mr. Bowie, that ill fortune might attend him and his successors in the Manse. The laird of Inchbrackie, however, made a last-hour intercession on her behalf, and was rewarded with a bluish stone which she spat out of her mouth (resembling an uncut sapphire), with the prophecy that so long as it was kept in his family, they would never lack heirs. And it must be admitted that they did not.

In the days of the great cattle trysts at Crieff (which were transferred to Falkirk in 1770), great numbers of black-cattle used to come down this way from the northern glens to be met by the dealers from the South. Monzie was then one of the favourite stopping places of the droves and their numerous herds. As many as thirty thousand head of cattle, it is said, used to be brought in to one of these trysts. And not so very long ago there were old people hereabouts who could remember hearing from their grandsires how the Highlandmen, barefoot and bareheaded, would ensconce themselves without ceremony in the kitchens of the houses, take their fill of potatoes from the gardens, and even appropriate the blankets they had used in the night.

. . . . . .

The Shaggie Burn goes back into the lonely hills northward between here and Glen Almond. A footpath winds its way up to the roaring little Monzie Falls—not the only falls worth looking at along this hillside, for the Keltie has them too, and, further back, the Barvick as well. And there is good hill walking up along the ridge here by way of Achinochen and the Blue Craigs which steeply overlook Loch Turret. From the Lodge at the head of this fine mountain loch a steep road runs down the wild open glen to Crieff again. Behind the loch rises dark Ben Chonzie, with a tiny lochan nestling down in the corrie on the easterly flank; and as one goes down the Glen Turret road, the views down towards the gentler strath are as fine as any in this part of the county. The Falls of Turret, up behind Ochtertyre, make the fourth of the series of waterfalls along this hillside.

. . . . . .

The Monzie by-road meets the main road a mile or so above

THE SMA' GLEN

the village, and we turn our faces north towards one of the great gates into the Grampians—the Sma' Glen.

It is a satisfying pass, one that seems to break through the long ridge overlooking Strathearn with the decisiveness of an engineer's purpose. At the fork of the road, before entering the glen, it is worth while to turn a few yards down to the right, towards Buchanty, climb the green bank by the roadside and get the view up the pass from above the Almond's right-angle bend at Dallick. On the right of the gateway are the pleasant wooded slopes below Dunie, and across the burn, the bare heathered slopes, bumped and broken, that run up to Meall Tarsuinn. Up this defile Wade drove his road, along very much the same line that the road follows to-day; and the strategic importance of the Sma' Glen was nothing new even in his day. For on the roadside field here, a little further east, there are sketchy remains of a Roman camp which is known by the name of the tributary burn flowing below it, the Fendoch. In its original form, Raenfhandoch (as its Gaelic name was) probably enclosed some forty-five acres; but most of its traces have disappeared under the hands of ploughmen and dyke builders. In the earlier part of last century, it is recorded, a considerable number of ancient remains—coins, spearheads, pots, bridle-fragments, and other things—were found, attributed to Roman sources.

The glen narrows quickly as we turn into it. Trees are left behind, the burn alongside the road takes sudden twists as it strikes the rocks in its bed, and the air grows keener as we move into the heart of the encircling hills. The contrast with the kindly low-country of Strathearn is sudden and sharp—there is no entrance into the Highlands that can strike the stranger more unmistakably with the sense of being in a country with a different atmosphere, a wilder spirit, a sterner life. Even on a fine summer's afternoon, with the road alive with cars, the Sma' Glen does not lose altogether its air of forbidding ruggedness, an untamed way into an untamed land—but in the winter months, on a December evening, with snow-clouds coming darkly down from the north, the cold wind tugging at the tussocky grass beside the road and whistling in the wire fence, he who walks alone will be uncommonly glad to have sight of the lighted windows at Amulree. . . .

On the burnside haugh near the top of the glen lies a great

flat stone, known to fame as marking the site of Ossian's grave. It is not Ossian's only grave; and in any case, it was removed from its original situation by Wade's pioneers. But it is a well-accepted monument by reason of Wordsworth's poem on it. The poet and his sister passed this way on their tour in September, 1803, coming south from Dunkeld and making for Callander. They were uncertain at Dunkeld which way they should turn to the best advantage, and had heard of the romantic character of the Sma'—or "Narrow"—Glen. Would it be worth a visit? They cross-examined the waiter at the inn at Dunkeld, and asked that worthy whether it was particularly "grand"? He, poor man, was unaccustomed to travellers in search of the romantic *frisson*, and could only answer them: "No, no—I do not think there are any gentlemen's seats in it." However, they took that way, and duly appreciated "the hills on both sides, heathy and rocky, very steep but continuous; the rocks not single or overhanging, not scooped into caverns or sounding with torrents: there are no trees, no houses, no traces of cultivation, not one outstanding object. It is truly solitude, the road even making it appear more so; the bottom of the valley is mostly smooth and level, the brook not noisy: everything is simple and undisturbed, and while we passed through it the whole place was shady, cool, clear and solemn. . . ." This account stresses one feature of the glen which is certainly striking—its silence. And it was perhaps this which Wordsworth also remembered most sharply when, on learning afterwards that the glen was the reputed grave of the great Celtic bard, he wrote his commemorative lines:

"In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the narrow Glen;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And every thing unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm, there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed ?
Or is it but a groundless creed ?
What matters it ?—I blame them not
Whose fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A Convent, even a hermit's Cell
Would break the silence of this Dell :
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these :
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead :
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race !
Lies buried in this lonely place."

Ossian or not, the stone was certainly the mark of a grave. When Wade's men turned it over in 1746, they found a stone chamber containing bones and some fragments of metal; for these remains they prepared a fresh grave, and re-interred them—pipers playing a lament the while.

The Newton Bridge crosses the Almond, and there the road leaves the burn and drives into the rockiest part of the pass, climbing steadily between the faces of rock round the flank of Meall Reamhar towards the cluster of houses that makes up Amulree, five miles beyond the bridge.

Glen Almond itself runs westward into a very wild tract of country from the Newton Bridge; the road is not good, but the rewards of the walker, in these days, are correspondingly great. On the hillside above the stream's right bank, over against Conichan, there lies a curious natural pile of massive rocks bearing the name of the " Kirk of the Grove." And on the same hillside, further back, there is a large cave, renowned in days gone by as the refuge of a distinguished sheep-stealer named Alister Bain, who was ultimately captured here, in the act of roasting part of his booty, and later hanged on the Perth gallows.

At Amulree we enter on the head of a different country, the bare, wide expanse of Strath Bran. The Bran itself runs under the bridge at Amulree, tumbling from the unfrequented Loch Freuchie two or three miles to the west. The by-road that runs over from here by way of Glen Quaich Lodge to Kenmore, on Loch Tay, is notoriously one of the most dangerous in the Highlands. Its famous " Amulree Hill " has been used for motor-car tests, but

the road is closed to general motor traffic. The walker, however, can rejoice: for a magnificent stretch of bare hill country is left to him, to the blackface sheep, to the curlews.

Another road, much easier but no less beautiful, comes across these hills from Aberfeldy into Strath Bran a mile or so beyond Amulree—the Glen Cochill road. It is very lonely, with not a single house after the first mile up from Strath Bran until we are over the watershed and looking down into Strathtay, and it climbs steadily, mile after mile, to the little Loch-na-Craige, set high on the dividing ridge. A place of unspoilt beauty, here. A tumble of dark rocks; the clear waters of the lochan below, with the winding road skirting its heathery banks; no trees, except an occasional stunted fir seeded by chance and clinging tenaciously to a stern, wind-torn life; the faint lapping of the water; and over the head of the little loch, the rising heads of many mountains. . . . And then the road plunges steeply past the road-metal quarries, with their uncouth little overhead carriers grinding up and down over the fields and the fringe of the moors, down into Aberfeldy.

But for the moment our journey goes on down Strath Bran, and we are heading for Dunkeld. For some five miles the strath has few features to catch the passing eye; but then the Bran drops into woods and deep places, and there are many. Two miles out of Dunkeld a by-road turns off and crosses the burn by the so-called Rumbling Bridge. Here the water drops into a steep, rocky gorge, and the din of the fall, especially of course when the stream is in spate, has given the bridge its name. (It should not, of course, be confounded with the Rumbling Bridge over the Devon in Kinross-shire, a more famous spectacle.)

And a little further downstream we reach (from the other bank, off the Inver road) the "Hermitage," a sight that has been well known to visitors to the Highlands since the eighteenth century. The stream here comes to a steep drop in its bed, and the cataract is a fine one; but the eighteenth century had a taste for improving on such occasions, and the Duke of Atholl of the time indulged it here to the full when he constructed, here in his pleasure-grounds, the original "Hermitage." The present building only dates from the seventies of last century, but of the original and its marvels several diverting accounts have survived. The best is perhaps that of Robert Heron, who visited the spot in the autumn

of 1792, and in his *Observations*, published at Perth in the following year, left a very clear description of this curiosity. Its manner accords so pleasingly with the gentle artificiality of its time and its own nature that it is worth quoting at some length:

"I was conducted to the banks of the *Bran*, whose torrent pours down with furious impetuosity which is still [further] irritated and increased by the opposition of the huge stones, which rise here and there in its channel, and impede its course. This river, the gloomy aspect which the season and the inclemency of the weather communicated even to the most cultivated parts of the landscape, and the appearance of frowning crags above, wherever the eye was raised,—frowning even where they were thinly shaded with young wood—joined all together in producing the full effect that could be wrought upon the imagination and the feelings by scenery the most *romantic*.

"When I understood therefore that we had approached near to a noble cataract over which, in a situation alarming, though secure, hung a building known by the name of *Ossian's Hall*, I was charmed with the hope of seeing the cataract in all its majesty, and with the idea of the propriety with which a rude building corresponding to our notions of the character of the ancient Celtic bard, and of the accommodations of his time, had been erected in such a situation. When we came nearer, somebody whispered to me, that I was going to be alarmed and deceived by what would be immediately exhibited."

And Mr. Heron was!—

"We reached the edifice [he goes on]. The door was unlocked and thrown open; and immediately after, by the shifting of an intervening cover, the figure of Ossian was suddenly exposed to view. So far all was well: for the painting is a noble one and does honour to the Artist who drew it: he was said, I think, to be a Mr. Stewart. But, by Ossian we were now admitted to an interior apartment, spacious, light, airy, and elegant; set around with mirrours, and more like a *boudoir* than a hermitage.

"This apartment hangs over the water-fall. On that side, the whole room is illuminated. The river was full, and an unusually large volume of water poured over the precipitous rocks in the channel. By the pressure, and the impetuosity with which it fell, a great part of it was whitened, or broken into foam. A mist hung over it, and by communicating a small degree of gloom, greatly enhanced the grandeur of the scene. The surrounding

rocks, the character of the trees that shaded them, the stunning din with which the water was precipitated from the height of the cataract,—all co-operated finely to elevate the imagination, and to impress the feelings with a pleasing solemn awe.—It was that wild sublimity which calls home the powers of the mind from lighter excursions, and suggests some of the loftiest sentiments that can be associated with material imagery. But, while the mind was thus moved, it was impossible to turn the eye, for a moment from this impressive scenery, without having the fine train of thought with which it had been swelled, most disagreeably broken. The glaring gaiety of the room was of a character inconsistent with that of the objects around it. It dispelled the solemn awe, and pleasing melancholy with which those impressed the mind; yet not so entirely as to introduce in their room, its own airy cheerfulness; and the consequent effect was, that the imagination and the feelings were harrassed and disgusted between the two. To add to this, the mirrours which are inlaid round the walls, and in the ceiling of this apartment, are, by a fantastic contrivance, so disposed, as to afford various reflections of the whitened volume of water, as it pours down the cataract; like smoke, like flame, like boiling oil. This is Conceit of which the contriver was probably very proud; and I doubt not but it may have been much admired by *many a visitant of taste*. But, I must confess, that I could not help considering it with other sentiments than those of admiration. Contrast does indeed produce fine effects in gardening, no less than in other fine arts: and surprise is on many occasions, not an unpleasing emotion. But, surely, in these scenes, this contrast is very unsuitably displayed, and this surprise very unseasonably excited. I could never adopt Dr. South's notion, that a good epigram is the most perfect, and the noblest of human compositions. Except for the expression of solitary thought, or in the light, airy play of elegant conversation, I could never regard epigram as producing happy effects. But, if epigram be not always advantageous in composition in language, epigrammatic *point* and *turn* are undeniably unsuitable in all Fine Arts which employ bulkier and more unwieldy signs than words. In painting, in architecture, in music, epigram is always injurious, unless where burlesque effects are intended: but in gardening it is absolutely detestable. Pity, that the noble character of English gardening, should be anywhere disgraced by epigrammatic conceit. In this light do I view the airy hall overhanging this cataract, with its quaint decorations: And after having my feelings, coarse as they are, affected by it, as they were, I cannot help entering my protest against it.—And yet I may be wrong."

As for the Wordsworths, who were taken there in 1803, they at first were provoked to mirth ("we both laughed heartily," wrote Dorothy, "which, no doubt, the gardener considered as high commendation; for he was very eloquent in pointing out the beauties of the place"), but later William's irritation found vent in an "Effusion, in the Pleasure-ground on the Banks of the Bran, near Dunkeld." He profoundly disapproved of these conceits:

"... O Nature—in thy changeful visions,
Through all thy most abrupt transitions,
Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime—
Ever averse to pantomime,
Thee neither do they know nor us
Thy servants, who can trifle thus;
Else verily the sober powers
Of rock that frowns, and stream that roars,
Exalted by congenial sway
Of Spirits, and the undying Lay,
And Names that moulder not away,
Had wakened some redeeming thought
More worthy of this favoured Spot;
Recalled some feeling—to set free
The Bard from such indignity!

. . . . . .

... I mused; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness."

CRAIGEND, NEAR PERTH

V

Ochtertyre, near Crieff.—The massacre of the Murrays.—Old-time housekeeping: the Ochtertyre accounts.—Monzievaird.—Tomachastle.—Over Torlum to Drummond Castle.—Glen Artney.—Glen Almond and Trinity College.—Bessie Bell and Mary Gray.—Methven.

WESTWARD from Crieff, Strathearn narrows as it runs up toward St. Fillans at the end of Loch Earn. Soon after crossing the Turret Water, the road passes along the edge of the Ochtertyre policies, and that is a name to call up various memories of the past.

The house, invisible from the road, lies above the two lochs in its finely wooded grounds, and for close on five centuries has been in the hands of an unbroken line of Murrays. The founder of the family was one Patrick, who died in 1476, a younger son of the sixth Baron Tullibardine. A grandson of his was among the dead on Flodden Field, and Sir William, the second of the line of baronets, was captured by Argyll at Sheriffmuir; his grandson, again, was similarly unlucky at Prestonpans. And to Sir Patrick Murray (1771–1837) Perthshire owes the building of a great many excellent roads which, in their day, opened up many parts which Wade's system had left still inaccessible. The present house is of no great architectural interest; but there is in the grounds a small Gothic mausoleum, effectively placed, which marks the site of the old church of Monzievaird, where, in the year 1511, a large number of the local Murrays, women, children and all, were burnt alive.

That was a dark business. There was a feud of fairly long standing between the Murrays and the Drummonds, whose lands lay not far off, and during a foray of the former the Drummond men were sadly worsted in a set-to somewhere near Muthill. The Murrays returned home in high fettle, but just at this time there came on the scene the redoubtable Duncan Campbell of Dunstaffnage, bent on avenging the slaying of his aged father-in-law, Drummond of Monzie, who had suffered at the hands of these same turbulent Murrays. Campbells and Drummonds united

their armed men in one powerful band of vengeful clansmen, and surrounded their enemies in the old church of Monzievaird. Summoned to surrender, the Murrays refused; the rights of sanctuary were ignored, and a siege was begun. It ended by the Drummonds setting fire to the heather thatch of the church—and not one of those within escaped or was spared. The number who perished thus is differently recorded. Scott, who mentions the affair in his introduction to the *Legend of Montrose*, is probably too high with his figure of eight score, with their wives and children as well. But there is good foundation for the main facts of the story; and when the present mausoleum was erected in 1809 many pieces of the old charred wood of the original church were discovered. King James IV did not let the incident pass unpunished—he was keeping a pretty close eye on the doings of these internecine chiefs—and William, the Master of Drummond, was tried and condemned at Stirling, and his rank and family could not prevent him from being beheaded.

But that story is too lurid a glimpse to remember Ochtertyre by. The house has kindlier memories stored in an old manuscript account-book preserved amongst its archives, which is known to the antiquaries of Scotland as giving as clear a picture as anything of its kind of the mode of life of a large Highland establishment of two hundred years ago. And a glance at its pages in the passing is not without interest.* In great part, the "accomps" of the book deal with the household at Fowlls Easter—a property acquired by the first baronet in 1667, situated down in the Carse of Gowrie—but, at one house or the other, the family doubtless lived in much the same style. And there is always an odd fascination in seeing so closely how they spent their pence and arranged the small businesses of living—those far-off beings who are but names on a stone, entries on the laden branches of a family-tree. It is more often in these useless trifles, haphazardly preserved in an old box, than in careful, formal records of seemingly important events that the past of a house, a family, a country will quicken into life. Hinges that have been rusted these hundred years and more once were regularly greased; that old table now turned into a door in a disused stable once stood in the stone-flagged kitchen where they made ready—on Saturday, the 25th of March, 1738—

* The book was printed privately for the Scottish History Society in 1907.

" Dinner sheephead broth
Foulls boyld (2)
Pork boyld peices (1)
Hares rost (1)
A pease pudding and trouts
A peice of the neck of beefe for servts
Supper stewd hare
Eggs bufft harrings and scorchanarrow . . ."

Small-cord and pack-thread, ladels, sausage-fillers, kitchen paper, wooden pudding-pans, little " ranges," or pot-scourers, of heather, racks and spits, glue and resin—all these things had to be thought of. On Monday, April 20th, 1738, a sheep was killed and a half of it sent to Edinburgh; on Sunday, 26th, a salmon was sent from Ballathie; on the 28th a pig was " collared " and sent to Dundee; and on the next Friday ten flounders were received. " Miss Anns shooes " cost five shillings and sixpence on the 7th of January in the previous year, and an entry of a tantalising nature occurs on that same day, thus :

" 300 oysters . . . £0–0–0."

This may have been an extravagance, or it may not; but on the whole the prices marked as being paid seem to have been pretty reasonable in eighteenth-century Perthshire—even allowing for the altered scale of values and difficulties of transport. Thus :

	£	s.	d.
" Tewsdy. Janury 4, 1737.			
For a dozen of eggs	0	0	2
For 11 haddoes and 2 cods	0	1	0½
For barum	0	0	6."
" Tewsdy. March 1, 1737.			
For 3 cods and barm	0	1	3½
For a letter to Sir Wm.	0	0	2
For a washing ruber	0	0	10
For ½ a pound of harts horn	0	1	3
For 2 ounces of iceing glass	0	0	10
For 2 pounds of beefe sweit	0	0	8
For a peck of small salt	0	0	6½
For cockles	0	0	4."
" Monday. Aprile 17, 1738.			
For eggs	0	0	5
For the loading of the wine	0	1	0
For a bottle of elexar salutas	0	0	3."
" Tewsdy. Aprile 18, 1738.			
For eggs	0	0	4½
Killed a lamb		—	
For postage of letters	0	0	9
For barm to wort	0	0	7
For holand sand and potashes	0	0	4
For 9 gross of corks	0	9	0
For a pound of prewins	0	0	3."

And so it goes on. The kitchen boy gets a pair of new shoes in March, and has worn them out by August—half-a-crown each time—and John Stewart is supplied with a pair of stockings at the cost of eighteen pence. A "poor man" (generically, no doubt) is given twopence at intervals, and the men who "wrocht at the lint" (the flax-dressers) were strengthened with a "peice of pork." Hawks were kept; there are frequent entries of "foulls for the hawks," "thigh of beefe for the hawks," "rump for the hawks." Moorfowl, deer, partridge, woodcock, "feltefers" (fieldfares), plover, snipe, curlew, wild geese, dotterels, solan geese (brought as a luxury from the capital), teal, pigeons, hares, and (very occasionally) rabbits—these made their appearance on the table at more or less appropriate seasons. . . . As one runs through the close, careful entries of this unnamed chronicler, one is aware of the unchanging thread of everyday life, the thread that leads unerringly into the heart of past history and draws forth into a momentary life the bones and names of ancestors. . . .

. . . . . .

Monzievaird is a small village to the westward of the Ochtertyre grounds, and just beyond it a road runs down towards the railway and the Earn. It passes close to the hill of Tomachastle, on which stands the monument raised in 1832 to the local military hero, Sir David Baird (1757–1829). It is a fine obelisk over eighty feet high of Aberdeen granite—reputed to be an exact replica of Cleopatra's Needle (though it looks somewhat higher). The General (it may not now be so readily remembered) was prominent at the storming of Seringapatam, succeeded Moore in the command after Corunna, and had also seen service in Egypt—or, as the admiring parish minister of Monzievaird put it in his *Statistical Account* in 1842, "the gallant soldier was the first with an European army to ascend the Red Sea, cross the Desart, descend the Nile, and display the united standards of Britain and Brama on the shores of Alexandria." Baird spent his later years, not here, but at Ferntower on the Knock of Crieff, and was a figure of high repute in the district a century ago. They told many stories of his quick temper and his crotchets; but he was held in great affection and his memory is fittingly commemorated on this hill above the river with its fine views over the upper strath. "Gey ill to live wi'—but far waur to want"—that was the comment long attached to the name of General Baird.

The "castle" whose name is preserved in the name of this hillock was, traditionally, a stronghold of the Earls of Strathearn. And tradition may well be right. It always declared that the castle there was burned down, and that certain ladies of high rank perished miserably thereby. It is possible that one of these was Joanna, wife of the Earl de Warenne, condemned to perpetual imprisonment by the Black Parliament at Scone in 1320, being guilty of treason against King Robert I. In any case, when Sir David Baird's obelisk was being raised in 1832, the workmen came upon the unmistakable remains of a large building, with fragments of armour, human bones, and charcoal—all pointing to some measure of truth in the immemorial tradition of the district.

. . . . . .

Beyond this, the road crosses the Earn of Strowan Bridge—and there is no more attractive stretch of the river than this, with its wooded banks, the gentleness of the riverside fields, and the farther background of hills north and south. And further on, branching off the Crieff–Strowan–Comrie road, a pleasant by-way leads over the shoulder of Torlum Hill. Like many conspicuous hilltops, Torlum has a reputation as a weather-gauge; it may be memorised in the old lines:

"On Torlum tap there is a mist,
And in the mist there is a kist,
And in the kist there is a cap,
And in the cap there is a drap.
Coup up the cap,
And leave the drap
On Torlum tap!"

The road drops sharply into the secluded valley of Balloch, which lies under the fine woods that go down towards the policies of Drummond Castle. The small loch down here was once of much greater extent, but was drained in the later eighteenth century. In 1762 the commissioners of the estates forfeited after the 'Forty-five—the Drummond estate, of course, was one of these—settled a number of Perth families on the land round about here, and in the days before the clearances the population was quite a considerable one. Half-a-mile further on is one of the entrances (not the

main one, which lies on the Crieff–Muthill road) to Drummond Castle, one of the finest of the county's great seats.

Few have a finer position. The old castle and the new stand side by side, on one great mass of upcropping rock, and below them drop the natural rock-terraces of the gardens. The original castle was founded in 1491 by John, first Lord Drummond—ancestor of the Earls of Perth—and had a career so stormy that it is a wonder that any of it survived. True, it is only the tall square tower in the centre that is of any great age; Oliver Cromwell and his men dealt sternly with a great part of the rest. King James IV was a frequent visitor here, and Mary Queen of Scots came twice in 1566. What Cromwell left fell into even more grievous dilapidation after the troubles of 1688, and the further troubles of the Stuarts left successive ravages on its gray, four-square walls. In 1715 they were garrisoned by royal troops, but in 1745 the place was an important Jacobite centre, and lest it should again be of service to the Hanoverian forces the stalwart Jane Gordon, Duchess of Perth, caused it to be almost completely razed.

It remained thus, a rather melancholy monument of a lost hope, until about 1840, when a restoration was made round the main tower—and the complete block to-day is an imposing pile that still, from certain standpoints, dominates the agreeable but less uncompromising baronial of the modern castle by its side. In the gardens, by the way, the visitor should not overlook the curious sundial, designed for the second Earl when he laid out this terraced pleasaunce about 1630. Further over, lies the pleasing expanse of Drummond Pond, almost a mile long if one counts the closely adjacent stretch of water on the other side of the Crieff road. This water covers a great part of the land settled by the commissioners as mentioned a moment ago; but the old enmities died hard hereabouts, and after these settlers' families had greatly decreased in numbers, the Countess of Perth (so goes the story) determined that the memory of these loyalists' rewards should be obliterated; and the Pond was formed over their holdings.

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West of the Machany Water, which runs through the parish of Muthill and meets the Earn down at Kinkell Bridge, begins a wide tract of fine, open, easy hills. The Knaik runs down to the Allan Water through its quiet and pleasant glen, and the sheep

have a fine range over these even, steady slopes over towards Loch Mahaick and Uam Var. These are the uplands which the traveller northward from Stirling and Dunblane sees as he comes into Strathallan—solitude without wildness, houses strung out far apart along the hillsides, the dykes few and far between, only an occasional sheep-fank breaking the even expanse of tussocky grass.

BUCHANTY, GLEN ALMOND

But further up, over the watershed, the burns take the turn down into Glen Artney and the Ruchill Water; and up on that ridge there rises into view the steep desolation of the great deer-forest that makes the name of that glen famous to sportsmen. To follow the steep hurrying burn of the Findhu Glen is to strike through the heart of this lonely tract, which seems to have nothing stirring in it but the sheep intent on their browsing and the curlews slanting down the wind. And even Glen Artney, a glen of scattered houses, has quite a marked impress of humanity beside these solitudes.

Auchinner Lodge, at the head of the glen, marks the end of the motor-road up from Comrie. But, at the right season of the year, the foot wanderer will find his rewards if he has the chance of following up either of the two hill-tracks that leave the road here: one, running straight ahead over the hills to the upper waters of the Keltie, which it meets about six miles above Callander; the other, up the steep narrow glen to the north, through the heart of the deer-forest, and leading (after some hard enough going) to the back of Dundarn, the hill that looks down upon St. Fillans.

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But let us turn east of Crieff again before leaving Strathearn and its neighbourhood.

There is a pleasant out-of-the-way road that runs over from Fowlis Wester towards Buchanty, into the lower stretches of Glen Almond, quiet country lying in the shelter of the higher Grampian wall. On the right bank of the Almond, sheltered by some fine old trees, stand the buildings of Trinity College—usually referred to simply as Glen Almond—surely one of the most happily situated public schools in the whole country. It was founded in 1847, and its achievements have certainly not belied the hopes of those who chose this site for it as one "not adjacent to any large centre of population."

Further downstream, the Almond comes to a wooded stretch with sweeping bends where it ripples past a spot long beloved of the ballad-writers—the grave of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, whose death was sung, and embellished, by Allan Ramsay. Their story

TRINITY COLLEGE, GLEN ALMOND

dates from the year 1666, when the city of Perth was stricken by plague; Elizabeth Bell, daughter of the laird of Kinvaid, and Mary Gray, whose father was the laird of Lednock, neighbouring estates in the parish of Moneydie, were young and beautiful, and friends. They conceived the plan of sheltering from the infection by

building themselves a hut in the woods hereabouts, and living there until the danger was past. In vain, however: solitude did not protect them, and the two girls perished. The old traditional lines record the story thus:

"O Bessie Bell and Mary Gray
They were twa bonnie lasses.
They biggit a bower on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it ower wi' rashes.

"They thought to lie in Methven Kirk
Amang their noble kin,
But they were laid on Lednock Brae,
To beik fornent the sun!"

Allan Ramsay seems to have been responsible for the more romantic details of their lover, and in so doing probably preserved the fame of the unhappy maidens longer than it might otherwise have endured.

As a matter of fact, it has been pointed out, the precaution taken by Bessie and Mary was not without analogies in times of plague. It is recorded on good authority that when the pestilence was raging in the near-by parish of Monzievaird in 1645, the local lairds "caused many huts to be built and ordered all who perceived that they were infected immediately to repair unto them. Particularly the family of Ochtertyre caused observation to be made every morning whether the wind blew from the east or west. They sent provisions of all kinds to them, but gave their servants strict orders, if the wind blew from the east, to lay them down a good way to the east of them; and to the west if it blew from the west; and some time after they were gone the cleansers took them up and carried them to the diseased."

A couple of miles south of here lies Methven, where the Earl of Pembroke defeated Bruce in 1306, shortly after his crowning at Scone. It was a surprise attack in the woodland that stretched hereabouts, and Bruce's rebuff was a decided one. With the survivors he sought refuge in the hills, and it was five years before Perth was his again. The Castle grounds, some way east of the village, contain a notable oak, known as the Pepperwell tree, with a girth of fully eighteen feet, and a recorded history of four centuries.

LOCH TAY WITH BEN LAWERS

VI

The *Sportsman's Guide*.—Salmon pools in the Tay.—Wolves in Perthshire. Wolf hunts.—The fox and his hunters.—The red deer; the *tainchels*.—The royal hunting in 1529.—The white hind of Breadalbane.

A FRIEND tells me that he can never arrive at the Perth General Station and catch sight of the main bookstall there without a twinge of his heart for the late lamented *Sportsman's Guide*. Every summer, in the days before the War, there used to rise on the stall a noble column of that stout and sturdy publication—and why it should have been a victim when so many flimsier publications survived Armageddon, is something of a mystery. *Obiit* 1915—and I rejoice that, at least, I have a copy of the last issue. It showed few signs of being at all affected by the cataclysm; nothing disturbed its genial appraisal of moors and forests, its always rather rosy estimates of the size of the trout to be found in this burn or in that loch, its polite disparagements of your hope that Mr. So-and-so of Dunsomething might possibly grant you leave to try your hand on the preserved stretches above his mansion. Only the announcement of a game-dealer in Manchester seemed to strike a foreboding note in that last issue of an annual which perfectly reflected the solid security of an established order—owing to the coming scarcity of foodstuffs, he announced, "rabbits and game will fetch HIGH PRICES this year," and he solicited consignments accordingly. . . .

It was a satisfying cover to look at, the *Sportsman's Guide*—in a somewhat baroque development of the Landseer tradition. Carefully arranged and engraved, an enormous stag—a "royal," of course—stood confronting you defiantly on a rugged rock in the heather, conveniently marked with the name of the publishers. His magnificent antlers upheld a variety of things—a part of the lettering of the book's title, and also a complicated looping of fishing tackle. At the feet of this proud creature lay an angler's

creel, a black retriever bearing a well-killed hare, several lordly salmon, a rabbit, a very manly and *nemo me impune* thistle, and a brace of grouse. And he was enframed, most majestically, within a kind of pergola of fishing-rods, landing-nets and gaffs, from which was further suspended a selection of snipe and pheasant. Behind this strange group (a *nature morte* it might well be termed) stretched an appropriate and imposing landscape of mountain and loch, very craggy, very grand. . . . It was a sportsman's dream. . . . If ever the *Sportsman's and Tourist's Guide to the Rivers, Lochs, Moors and Deer-Forests of Scotland* reappears, I earnestly hope it will not do so in anything but this admirable cover—a modernisation of the covers of *Punch* or *Blackwood's* could not be more disastrous.

Perthshire always, and naturally, took up a good deal of space in the *Guide*. The account of the salmon pools of the Tay alone would give any traveller an agreeable half-hour's reading; as he waited in Perth Station for the old green coaches of the Highland line to creak themselves into activity, he could divert himself with considering the descriptive quality of their very names—names like the Piper's Pool, Pol-tober-ma-veigh, the Broad Shot and the Fiddler's Elbow, Back of the Gravel, Beardy Willie's Pool, Ram's Horn, Cost More, the Gauge Tree, Back o' the Kirk, the Foul Dub, the Giant's Steps, Pot Shot Head, Rumbling Hole, Shochie Mouth, Hummel Hole and Honey Hole and Fish Her Weel. . . . Were not these enough to make him put his head out of the window and make sure that his rods were really safe and labelled in the van?

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There is nothing about wolves in the *Guide*. But four and five centuries ago these beasts were a constant danger in the Perthshire glens. The old Litany of Dunkeld contains a prayer that shows how the peril ranked—"*From caterans and robbers, from wolves and all wild beasts, Good Lord deliver us*," it ran. The 1427 Parliament of James I, which sat at Perth, passed an ordinance that "ilk Baron, within his Barony, in gangand time of the year, shall chase and seek the whelps of the wolves, and gar slay them. And the Baron shall give to the man who slays the wolf in his Barony, and brings the Baron the heid, two shillings. And when the Barons ordain to hunt and chase the wolf, the tenants shall rise with the Baron, under the pain of a wedder ilk man not rising with

the Baron. And that the Barons hunt in their Baronies and chase four times in the year, and as often as any wolf be seen within the Barony."

These measures, however, seem to have availed little; and thirty years later the responsibility for waging this useful warfare was transferred by James II to the sheriffs and bailies, who, it was ordered, should " gather the country-folk three times in the year between St. Mark's Day and Lammas, for that is the time of the whelps. And whatever he be that rises not with the Sheriff, Bailie, or Baron, within himself, shall pay unforgiven a wedder, as is contained in the auld act made thereupon. . ." and so on.

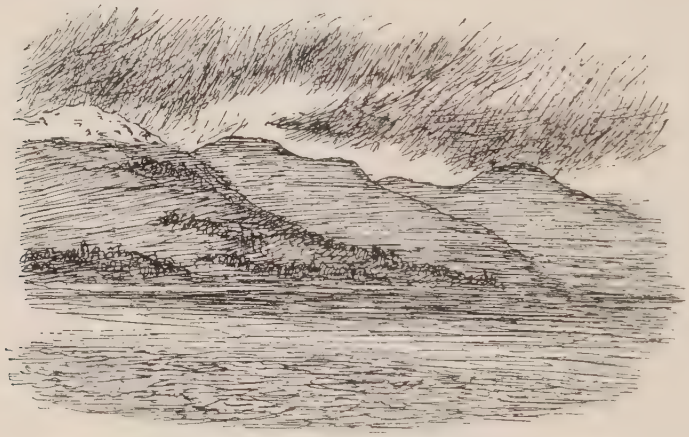
The monastic houses took their part in furthering these ordinances. The monks of the Abbey at Coupar Angus, for instance, inserted clauses binding their chief tenants to " rise " to the wolf hunting as occasion should arise, and on no account to fail in this communal duty. A lease dated 1483 binds one of their tenants, on lands at Innerarity, to obey the officers " rising in the defence of the country to wolf, thief, and sorners"—a significant apposition of pests.

The wolf was probably hunted in two ways, with dogs or with the bow. Hounds for the purpose came to be quite generally kept; and the charters of these same monks of Coupar Angus offer evidence of this: as, for example, a lease of land in upper Glen Isla * binding the Countess of Crawford and Lord Ogilvie to " sustain and feed ane leash of hounds for tod and wolf " (*i.e.* fox and wolf), and others about 1550 contain the same proviso. But near the foot of Kindrogan Hill, at the head of Strath Ardle, there is a huge, roughly circular rock which passes under the name of the Wolves' Rock and, if tradition be true, points to another way of clearing off the wolves. For the bowmen could lie hidden in the heather that is rooted on top of the rock, and pick off the wolves as they were lured there by carrion exposed, or perhaps by a smouldering fire. In Rannoch, during the early sixteenth century, wide tracts of forest were burnt down to rob the packs of shelter, but stragglers lived on persistently, lurking wherever they could.

* Glen Isla, by the way, seems to be still notable for beasts of prey. During the winter of 1927–28 a considerable number of wild cats, of the real mountain variety, were found, and for the most part killed, on the slopes of Mount Blair. It was said to be about seventy years since any of these creatures had been seen thereabouts.

When Queen Mary came to Atholl in the summer of 1564 there were five wolves among the bag at the great hunting held in her honour. John Taylor, the London "Water Poet," who visited Deeside in 1618, speaks of them being still plentiful on that side of the county march. And about 1650, somewhere in Glen Turret (behind Crieff), a pair of the creatures was chased a long way into the hills there and slain—which seems to be the last record of a wolf in Perthshire itself, although there is some ground for believing that in Aberdeenshire one was killed as late as 1743.

The legends attached to the name of St. Fillan include one concerning a wolf which it may be apposite to mention in this con-



SNOW ABOVE, AND RAIN BELOW

nection. The missionary came over from Ireland with a band of followers with the object of visiting his uncle, who was established and carrying out good works on the banks of the Dochart in what is now known as Strath Fillan. Arrived there, the new party began the building of a chapel on a site chosen by the help of divine inspiration and signs, and proceeded to rid the glen of various dangers that beset its people. But even while the Saint was building the chapel in the ordained spot, "as the oxen were being unyoked from the wains, a fierce and ravening wolf slew one of them and ate it to the bone. And in the morning, when Fillan now had no ox to take the place of that which had been thus slain, he poured forth his prayers to God, and the selfsame wolf returned from the hills, as a servant now, and no slayer, and submitted

himself to the yoke alongside the other oxen, and continued to draw the wain and the plough until the Saint's chapel was made fast and finished. Whereupon the repentant beast did return to his own nature, and ran back to the hills, doing hurt to neither man nor man's beast."

There is a very curious old work entitled *The Beauties of Edinample and Lochearnhead* which contains some odd tales about wolves. They are told in a truly extraordinary English style, which merits quotation for its own sake, for the book was the work of one of Lord Breadalbane's ghillies who had taught himself English with the help of a dictionary. Here are a couple of these Babu-like curiosities :

"In the ancient time, when the woods was more copious repletion both on the hills and on the level than it is at present, particular the oaks, which woods was a habitation to voracious wild animals, such as wolfs, which animals would slipped imperceptibly to houses, eluding observation, when the people at the field acting in their domestic management.

"A certain man, after being disengaged of his dies [day's] employment, upon his return to his house, he directed his eyes through the window to meet hypochondriacal discovery of his youngest child on one side of the fire, and the wolf on the other side. Upon the child to have an idea of being one of his father's dogs, he uttered some merriment expression to him, as gaiety laughter, at which his father's bowels did yearn over him observing his endearment amorous child at the hazard of being swallowed up or tear in pieces by that voracious animal; but as Providence meant otherwise for him, he drew his bow adventure, pointing to the said animal, with much anxiety how to screen his child from being injured or molested by the arrow : at which point he finished the above animal."

"About that same time the cattle of Glendochard has been taken away by violence or pillage by barbarous men of incoherent transactions. At that depredation a most excellent bull brake out from the force of the ravisher; which bull shelter himself in a vacant hovel, laying a distant from the rest of the hooses; he was much troubled by one of the wolfs already mentioned, for which he was laying between the door osts holding his head out to fence with that animal; the said combat has been observed by two men going that way.

"Upon some emergent occasion, the said men came on the

day following with bows and arrows, and placed themselves on the housetop where the said bull sheltered himself, waiting on the animal's coming. Upon his first discovery, the men, persuaded that he was of greater stature or size than his usual circumference, they remarked two of the wolfs close together with a cross stick in their mouth. When they arrived to the bull they yoked together on him; the men drew their bows, and killed them on the spot. When they descended off the housetop to look at them, they found one of them blind. It was the purpose of the other to lead the blind one by the stick, to acquire his assistance to finish the said bull, being the one had practical accustomed of assaying to kill him himself."

So much for wolves. The fox, of course, is still plentiful—too plentiful for the shepherd's peace of mind, especially while lambs are young. And as there is no connection between the "tod" and sport hereabouts, he usually meets with very short shrift; the hare-drives in winter time often bring in a fox or two. But some of the old leases have similar clauses to those mentioned above, aimed at the extermination of these creatures. And at one time, the hunting of the fox was certainly engaged upon for sporting purposes. In the so-called "Black Book of Taymouth," for instance, there is a letter from the Earl of Mar, dated from Stirling on November 5th, 1631, to Campbell of "Glenurchay," in the following terms:

"To my very loving cousin the Laird of Glenurchay.

"Loving Cousin,

"Being come in to stay in this town a good part of this winter, I think my greatest sport shall be the hunting of the fox, therefore I will earnestly entreat you to send me with this bearer a couple of good earth dogs.

"This is my first charge since your father died, and I pray you use me as familiarly as I do you; for without ceremony, cousin, you shall not have a friend over whom you have greater power than over me. Your loving cousin to do you service,

"Mar.

"What you send me, let it be good, although it should be but one."

And during the eighteenth century there grew up a regular class of hired fox-hunters, paid either by fixed wages or by a price on

THE TAY BELOW PERTH. KINNOUL HILL IN THE DISTANCE

every head brought in. In the old *Statistical Account* there are many entries showing how this system operated: in the parish of Weem, one notes, "the foxes, before the year 1760, made great havoc among the sheep, goats, &c., but from that time regular fox-hunters have been employed, by whose diligence and skill vast numbers of foxes have been destroyed, so that their number is now greatly reduced."

Indeed, it is of these professional fox-killers that the only long Scottish fox-hunting poem treats—a little-known performance by the Perthshire rhymester, Alexander Campbell, in his work *The Grampians Desolate*, published in 1804. His rhymed couplets portray the scene with spirit, and a good deal of interesting detail:

> "Ere peep of day, all ready for the sport,
> Forth from the *airidh* to the wilds resort;
> And hunters, hounds and shepherds' dogs rove wide,
> From knoll to knoll, from hill to mountain's side;
> The heath-cock shakes his wing—'tis dawn of day—
> Halloo! the hunt is up—away! away!"

But fox-hunters of the more orthodox kind may note that Perthshire claims to hold the record for a long run! On June 8th, in the year 1808 (the time of year may seem odd, but it is true), a Dunkeld shepherd was walking along the main road just north of the village, when he came upon the curious spectacle of a fox trotting wearily southwards, with a hound trotting no less wearily some fifty paces behind. He had no difficulty in catching the fox, and carried it to a neighbouring house, followed by the exhausted hound, where in a short time the fox died of exhaustion. No one in the district had any knowledge of the hound's provenance, but it was later discovered that it belonged to the Duke of Gordon, and that the fox had been started high up on the Monadhliath, between Badenoch and Fort Augustus, on June 4th, early in the morning. The chase had thus lasted for four full days, and the run, estimated without any allowance for doubling or crossing, had been well over seventy miles!

. . . . . .

The red deer, of course, is still plentiful in the higher Perthshire hills; and the names of such forests as those of Atholl and Glen Artney need no rehearsing. And in the lower hills, wherever there are sheltering woods, the roedeer may be looked for—even those whose explorations never take them off the main motoring

roads may often catch glimpses of a hind with her young watching them through the birches.

Their hunting has always been a carefully preserved right. In the old days a *tainchel* could become almost a matter of State, when, sometimes for their own pleasure, or sometimes in honour of higher powers in the land, the great landlords would summon their vassals for a great driving of the deer. The *tainchel*, or line of beaters, scoured wide areas of the hills, and drove the deer

UP GLEN LYON

down to the spots where the bowmen lay ambushed, and frequently the beasts were slain in numbers almost incredible to the more prudent modern race of stalkers. On royal occasions these drives were sometimes carried out with much splendour of appurtenance. Lyndsay of Pitscottie left a memorable account of the Earl of Atholl's entertainment of King James V in 1529. Accompanied by a Papal legate who was then visiting Scotland, the king went north during the summer:

"The Earl of Atholl, hearing of his coming, made great and gorgeous provision for him in all things pertaining to a prince,

so that he was as well cared for in all things as if he had been in one of his own palaces. For this noble Earl of Atholl caused make ane curious palace to the King, his mother, and the ambassador, whereby they were as well eased as if they had been in any palace either of Scotland or England, and equivalent for the time of their hunting; which was biggit in the middle of a green meadow, and the walls thereof were of green timber woven with birks, and biggit in four quarters, as if it had been a palace, and in every quarter a round like a block-house, which were lofted and joisted three house height. The floor was laid with green earth, and strewed with such flowers that grow in the meadow, so that no man knew whereon he gaed, but as he had been in a green garden. Farther, there was two great rounds on every side of the yett, and a great portcullis of tree falling down as it had been a barrace yett, with a great drawbridge and a foussie of sixteen feet deep and thirty feet broad of water. This palace was hung with fine tapestry within, and well lighted in all necessary parts with glass windows.

" In this wilderness the King was well entertained the space of three days, with all such delicious and sumptuous meats as was to be had in Scotland, for fleshes, fishes, and all kinds of fine wine, and spices, requisite for a prince. Farther, there was no fishes that could live in fresh waters but were there swimming in the foussie about the palace.

" That is to say all kind of drink, as ale, beer, wine, both white and claret, malvoisie, muscadel, elegant hippocras, and aquavitæ. Farther, there was of meats, wheatbread, mainbread and gingerbread, with fleshes beef and mutton, lamb, veal and venison; goose, gryce, capon, cunning, crane, swan, partridge, plover, duck, drake, brisselcock and paunies, blackcock and moorfowl, capercailzies. And also the foussies . . . were full of all delicate fishes, as salmon, trouts, perches, pikes, eels, and all other kind of delicate fishes . . . were all ready for the banquet. Syne there were proper stewards, cunning bakers, excellent cooks, and potingars, with confections and drugs for their desserts.

" It is said, by the space of the three days that his grace was there, the Earl of Atholl was every day one thousand pounds of expenses.

" This Pope's ambassador, seeing so great a triumph in a wilderness, where there was no town near by twenty miles, he thought it a great marvel that such a thing should be in Scotland—that is, so courtlike and delicious entertainment in the Highlands of Scotland where he saw nothing but woods and wilderness. But most of all this ambassador, when the King was coming back from

the hunts, marvelled to see the Highlanders set all this palace on fire, that the King and ambassadors might see it. Then the ambassador said to the King, 'I marvel, Sir, you let yon palace burn wherein you were so well eased.' The King answered, 'It is the use of our Highlandmen that, be they never so well lodged all the night, they will burn the same on the morn.'—This being done, the King returned to Dunkeld that night, and on the morn to St. Johnstoun. It is said, at this time, in Athole and Strathardle bounds, there was slain thirty score of hart and hind, with other small beasts such as roe and roebuck, wolf, fox and wild cats," &c. . . .

Queen Mary was also treated to a royal hunting in Glen Tilt, in the summer of 1564, when she made a pleasant progress through this part of her realm. In her train was Robert Barclay, later to win fame as a jurist in France, who wrote a Latin account of the *tainchel* which Pennant translated:

"I had a sight of a very extraordinary sport. In the year 1564, the Earl of Athol, a prince of the blood royal, had, with much trouble, and vast expence, provided a hunting-match for the entertainment of our illustrious and most gracious Queen. Our people call this a royal hunting. I was then a young man and was present on that occasion. Two thousand Highlanders were employed to drive to the hunting ground all the deer from the woods and hills of Athol, Badenoch, Mar, Murray, and the countries about. As these Highlanders use a light dress, and are very swift of foot, they went up and down so nimbly, that, in less than two months' time, they brought together two thousand red deer, besides roe and fallow deer.

"The Queen, the great men, and a number of others were in a glen, or narrow valley, where all these deer were brought before them; believe me, the whole body moved forward like something in battle order. This body still strikes me, and ever will strike me; for they had a leader whom they followed close wherever he moved. This leader was a very fine stag, with a very high head. The sight delighted the Queen very much, but she soon had cause for fear, upon the Earl (who had been from his earliest years accustomed to such sights) addressing her thus: 'Do you observe that stag who is foremost of the herd? There is danger from that stag; for if either fear or rage should force him from the ridge of that hill, let every one look to himself, for none of us will be out of the way of harm, as the rest will all follow this one; and

having thrown us under foot, they will open a passage to the hill behind us.'

"What happened a moment later confirmed this opinion; for the Queen ordered one of the best dogs to be let loose on one of the deer; this the dog pursues—the leading stag was frightened—he flies by the same way he had come there—the rest rush after him where the thickest body of the Highlanders was. They had nothing for it but to throw themselves flat on the heath and to allow the deer to pass over them. It was told the Queen that several of the Highlanders had been wounded, and that two or three had been killed outright; and that the whole body of deer had got off, had not the Highlanders, by their skill in hunting, fallen upon a stratagem to cut off the rear from the main body. It was of those that had been separated, that the Queen's dogs, and those of the nobility, made slaughter. There was killed that day three hundred and sixty deer, with five wolves, and some roes."

The Queen's son, when he had become King James I of England, retained an interest in the deer of the Highlands. About 1620 there were tales told of a pure-white hind that hunters had seen round about Corrichiba in Breadalbane, and in time word of this reached the king. In January, 1622, James sent one of his foresters, Scandoner by name, to Campbell of Glenorchy, bearing a message in the following terms:

"To our trusty and well-beloved Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenurchy, Knight.

"James R.—Trusty and well-beloved, We greet you well. Having understood that there is in your bounds a white hind, we have sent this bearer, one of our servants, to take and transport her hither unto us; and because that country is altogether unknown to him, we have thought good to recommend him to you most earnestly . . . and nothing doubting of your best endeavour for accomplishing this our pleasure, we bid you farewell.

"Given at our Manor of Theobalds, the 13th day of January, 1622."

But the royal pleasure, apparently, was not enough to trap the white hind of Breadalbane. Master Scandoner went to try his skill in the Glen Artney Forest—but there is no record that, for all his pains, he was successful on Corrichiba.

VII

Strathfillan.—The Tyndrum lead-mines.—The *Dail Righ*.—St. Fillan's Pool.—Ben More and Stobinian.—Glen Falloch.—Loch Dochart.—Killin.—Inch Buie and the graves of the MacNabs.—Feuds and thievings.—Finlarig and Black Duncan.—The Breadalbanes.

STRATHFILLAN is a strath of railways, for it has two lines running, one on either bank of the Fillan Water, between Tyndrum at its head and Crianlarich, six miles further down. But it is remote and quiet as any glen of its kind could be: somehow the sight of the dwarfed train climbing and curving under those steep hillsides only accentuates the glen's wildness—especially at the upper end—and an occasional whistle echoes back from Ben Chaluim in a way that makes the silence only the deeper when the string of trucks has passed.

Tyndrum is a quiet village, with two railway stations, and the Perthshire boundary crosses the Oban road about half-a-mile beyond it. On the lower slopes of Meall Odhar lie the abandoned lead-mine workings which in their day made it a place of some economic importance. These veins were accidentally discovered in 1741, and Sir Robert Clifton, who then rented the mineral rights of the Breadalbane property, extracted nearly 1700 tons of lead ore during the first three years of working them. A body styled the Mine Adventurers of England then worked the deposits between 1745 and 1760. Other agents followed spasmodically, but the Scots Mining Company which began work at Tyndrum in 1768 were the most enterprising and successful. For over twenty years they carried out smelting as well as digging. After their regime things fell off considerably; German engineers tried their hand for a time during the eighteen-forties; and after the death of the Marquess of Breadalbane in 1862, nothing further was attempted.

A mile or so down the strath from the Royal Hotel at Tyndrum is the *Dail Righ*, or Dalry, the King's Field. It was here that Robert

the Bruce almost met his death on a famous occasion in 1306. When he fled north after his defeat at Methven that year, Bruce was attacked in this low-lying strip of Strathfillan by a formidable band of mixed clansmen led by the celebrated John of Lorne, who owed him blood-vengeance for his sacrilegious murder of the Red Comyn at Dumfries. One of the men of Lorne caught hold of Bruce's plaid in the *mêlée*, and in spite of a deadly wound, kept dragging Bruce back towards his attackers with such force that he had to free himself from the mantle. His brooch went with it, and although Bruce got free, to take refuge for a while (it is said) down in Glen Falloch and in a cave near Inversnaid, that brooch remained a trophy in his enemies' hands. And they have kept it to this day: it is preserved at Dunolly Castle, in Argyllshire, by the descendants of those MacDougals of Lorne.

Down the broad flanks of Fiarach to the west, and Ben Chaluim over against that, run a great number of small, cascading burns, scoring the brown slopes with long silvery scars when the spring rains suddenly fill them. They feed the Fillan Water generously, and the stream grows rapidly after it passes the Dail Righ and the bridge just below these. About four miles below Tyndrum it pauses for a moment in the pool known still as St. Fillan's Pool, which was long reported to have powers of healing for the insane—or, in the terminology of the old *Statistical Account*, the "fatuous." It was the custom to plunge these hapless persons into the water here after sunset on the first day of the quarter and before the following sunrise, and then to leave them firmly bound on the banks below the ruined chapel which bears the Saint's name. If the lunatic still remained trussed there when daylight came, it was held that nothing could cure him. Which is probably true. The minister of Killin in 1843 writes of this ordeal being still practised, not by natives of his parish, but by "people from other and distant localities." He had not heard of any cures being actually wrought; but he wisely opined that "the prospect of the ceremony, especially in a cold winter evening, might be a good test for persons pretending insanity."

The remains of the chapel of St. Fillan are now scanty, but seem to indicate a building originally about 120 feet in length and twenty-two wide. A curious square-shaped bell, reputed to be a relic of the Saint, used to lie on a tomb here until the end of the

eighteenth century, when it was stolen by an antiquary who took it south of the Border. Locally it was always believed that the bell would return to its proper resting-place; but so far, alas, it has not returned further than the museum of the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh.

Down a few miles further and we see Glen Falloch debouching on our right; and at the meeting-place of these two glens, with Ben More and Stobinian looming behind, lies Crianlarich. A small place, magnificently placed. There is no mass of hills in all the Grampians more satisfying to the mountain-sense than that of Ben More, Stobinian and Stob Garbh, which overlook it from the south-east. The first two are landmarks in many a view, to be seen from thirty or forty miles away—and that is saying a lot in a country

BEN MORE AND STOBINIAN, FROM GLEN DOCHART

so crossed and countercrossed with ranges and ridges. Bold and direct, they rise side by side with a kind of brotherly likeness to each other that is more evident from a distance than from close beneath them. In fine weather at the more genial times of year, Ben More can be climbed fairly easily by those of steady patience—the adventurous can find good opportunities for harder going or snow work by choosing their route and season accordingly—from the glen of Allt Coire Choarach, the burn that joins the Dochart near the so-called Rob Roy's Castle. There is probably no summit in Scotland that can offer a more comprehensive view, stretching far over Lochaber and Lorne to the westward, as well as over all the finest of the Grampians. But the climber should be careful about his return; it would not be well to get down too far in the steep mild gap between Ben More and Stobinian—a confusing and solitary recess.

Before we turn down Glen Dochart towards Killin and Loch

Tay, we must at least go up the other road as far as the head of Glen Falloch. A mile or so from Crianlarich the long wild cleft of this romantic glen, traversed by road and railway side by side, comes into full view. A lonely road beneath lonely hillsides. In scattered outposts amongst the heather rise the stunted, wind-twisted pines which have survived—by how many centuries?—the great Caledonian Forest. Dark, tough, and ageless in their antiquity, these trees (typical of other scattered relics of their kind in the county) seem like the aborigines of some unexplored land. By day silent, except for the wind catching them as it passes down the steep glen: but at night, might they not be talking in a tongue lost and forgotten?

The road drops fast towards the Falls of Falloch and the county march at the Arnan burn. In the old drove-road days, Inverarnan here was a noted tryst of herds and dealers from the west country and the Highland glens: there was a good hill-road from here over to Glen Fyne, and thence down to Inveraray. And, although the rest of Glen Falloch, down to the head of Loch Lomond, is beyond our given country, it is of interest to recall that for a long time the Falloch river was navigable up to this point; before the Ardlui pier was built the Loch Lomond boats used to sail right up to Inverarnan, where the stage-coaches would pick up passengers bound for Ballachulish or Fort William.

Turning back, however, to Crianlarich, we shall take the road past the church. Below the railway the Fillan Water broadens into the small but satisfying Loch Dochart. Let Dorothy Wordsworth describe how she and her brother found it in 1803—except for the railway skirting it, one may see it so nowadays on any fine summer evening:

"We had about eleven miles to travel before we came to our lodging,* and had gone five or six, almost always descending, and still in the same vale, when we saw a small lake before us after the vale had made a bending to the left; it was about sunset when we came up to the lake; the afternoon breezes had died away, and the water was in perfect stillness. One grove-like island, with a ruin that stood upon it overshadowed by the trees, was reflected on the water. This building, which on that beautiful evening seemed to be wrapped up in religious quiet, we were informed had been

* They were making for the inn at Suie, half-way to Killin.

raised for defence by some Highland chieftain. All traces of strength, or war, or danger, are passed away, and in the mood in which we were we could only look upon it as a place of retirement and peace. The lake is called Loch Dochart. We passed by two

ON THE DOCHART, ABOVE KILLIN

others * of inferior beauty, and continued to travel along the side of the same river, the Dochart, through an irregular, undetermined vale,—poor soil and much waste land.

"At that time of the evening, when, by looking steadily, we could discover a few pale stars in the sky, we saw upon an eminence, the bound of our horizon, though very near to us, and facing the bright yellow clouds of the west, a group of figures that made us feel how much we wanted in not being painters. Two herdsmen, with a dog beside them, were sitting on the hill, overlooking a herd of cattle scattered over a large meadow by the riverside. Their forms, looked at through a fading light, and backed by the bright west, were exceedingly distinct, a beautiful picture in the quiet of a Sabbath evening, exciting thoughts and images of almost patriarchal simplicity and grace. We were much pleased with the situation of our inn, where we arrived between eight and nine o'clock. The river was at the distance of a broad field from the door; we could see it from the upper windows and hear its murmuring; the moon shone, enlivening the large corn fields with cheerful light. We had a bad supper, and the next morning they made us an unreasonable charge; and the servant was uncivil, because, forsooth! we had no wine."

It was a disappointing climax to Miss Wordsworth's journey that day; but travellers even now must put up with the accidents

* Probably two glimpses of the longer Loch Tubhair.

of avarice and ill-manners; and anyhow, they could not rob her of that glamorous August evening. Patriarchal shepherds, in those early romantic days, struck the eye of poet and painter with a sharper, fresher impact than they might to-day; but that group would still fit pleasingly into the " irregular, undetermined " Glen Dochart of nowadays, along the level haughs of Luib or Ardchyle —it is strange, by the way, that this quick-eyed traveller made no mention of Ben More as she passed beneath that soaring flank.

After Luib, as we go on towards Killin, the railway recedes from the line of the road, and keeps higher up the hillside. There is plenty of good trout fishing to be had hereabouts, in the Dochart itself, and, when the water is right, in one or two of the small burns that feed it on either bank. The bridge just below the inn at Luib leads one over to a pleasant road of the humbler class on the left bank, which anyone on foot (in summer time, at any rate) will probably find preferable to the one we have been following up to this point.

THE BRIDGE AT KILLIN, AND INCH BUIE

A couple of miles beyond Ardchyle we meet the road that has come up Glen Ogle from Lochearnhead, and after that the road is uneventful until, as the Dochart hastens its pace over and between its boulders, we see the outlying houses of Killin. And there we

may pause, on the edge—almost—of Loch Tay.—All this time, by the way, our road has run through the parish of Killin, which has one of the widest areas in the county, and runs even to the summit of lonely Ben Laoigh where the head-waters of the Tay take their source.

. . . . . .

Killin, to look down on it from Stronachlachan on a fine spring morning, is a place blue with waters. It lies comfortably on a strip of even ground between two hurrying streams, the Dochart and the Lochay; and where these meet, barely half a mile below the Dochart bridge, Loch Tay begins. *Cill-fhinn*, the cell or burying-place of Fingal, is the generally accepted origin of the village's name, and a standing-stone three or four hundred yards west of the church is reputed to be that hero's last resting-place. But why one should favour this tomb over many others, it is for local patriotism to argue.

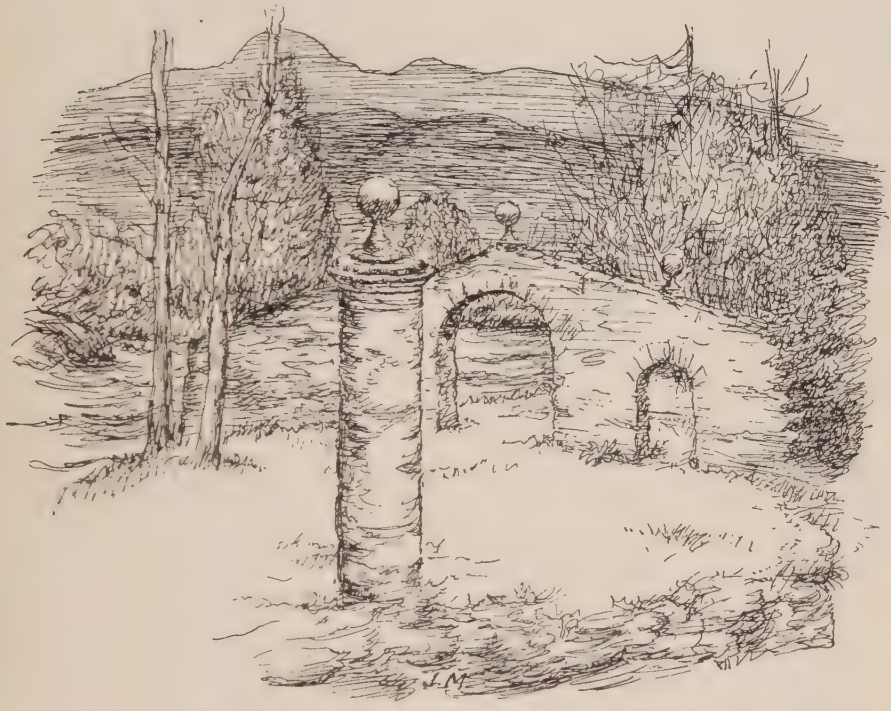
The Dochart here, as on most of its course, is a rushing rocky stream, and at the bridge here it is suddenly riven by Inch Buie, or Inis Bhuidhe, the Yellow Island. There is a path running down on to the island; walk down it and you reach a walled enclosure wherein, enveloped not in quiet but in the endless calling of the Dochart's waters, lie the chiefs and other great men of Clan MacNab; round about, without the enclosure, lies the commoner clay. More than a hundred years ago now, in 1821, the last chief of the MacNabs left this country of theirs, and betook himself to Canada; he took a number of his followers with him.* The MacNabs of that ilk had by then fallen on evil days. The eccentric Francis MacNab, who died in 1816, impoverished the estates beyond hope of recovery; he left liabilities amounting to over £35,000. But they had a great past behind them. Mention is made of the name in the form of King David I, the "sair sanct for the Crown"; but they appear more definitely as being joined with McDougal of Lorn against Robert the Bruce in 1306, and again as fighting against the Bruce at Bannockburn eight years later. They were punished for this, it is said, by a wild ravaging of their houses and lands in Glen Dochart. But the true founder of the MacNab line was one Gilbert, who obtained a royal charter for his

* Archibald MacNab returned to Scotland in 1853, but died in France in 1860.

THE DOCHART AT KILLIN

estates in 1336. After his day the family waxed great in these glens, their motto of *Timor Omnis Abesto* being doubtless an indication of their spirit.

It was a fierce spirit. The tale of the warring between the MacNabs and the MacNishes has long been preserved locally—though doubtless it is not the only bloody affair that went to the upholding of the clan's power. Throughout that reign of James I of Scotland the MacNabs suffered from the marauding of these



BURIAL-PLACE OF THE MACNABS AT KILLIN

MacNishes, a swift-footed and quick-fingered race, who had their principal fastness on an island at the east end of Loch Earn, on the waters of which they allowed no boat to be launched but their own.

One Christmas the MacNabs had sent a henchman down to Crieff to bring back delicacies for their festivities; and this man was waylaid and robbed by a band of MacNishes. The news came to Kinnell—the house that stands on the opposite bank from the village—at a time when provender was low and the appetite of the laird's twelve giant sons exceeding high. As they sat

gloomily round the unprovided board, their father strode into the room with a look of dark meaning in his eyes, and the cryptic words: "*'Si an oidhche an oidche na b'iad na gillean na gillean*"—"the night is the night—if the lads were the lads."

The *gillean* seized his meaning and lost no time. They took down their weapons and hurried down to the inlet on Loch Tay where they kept their boat. Taking it on their shoulders, they set off over the hill tracks—a cruel journey—to the head of Glen Tarken and followed its burn down to the banks of Loch Earn. It must have meant ten or twelve miles of this *portage*. They launched their boat on the forbidden MacNish waters, and rowed a couple of miles down to the island. On landing they found the marauders all drunk with their intercepted good cheer. When they banged on the locked door, the voice of an old MacNish came through to them: "Who knocks?"

"Whom would you like to see?" answered a MacNab.

"Smooth John," replied the old man. (This was the nickname of the doughtiest of these twelve sons.)

"Smooth enough till now," cried John, "but you'll find a rough John to-night!"

And they burst in. The old MacNish's head was cut off, and in the dawning light they bore it back over the hills to Kinnell. The rest of the fuddled crowd were left dead where they lay—all except one small boy who was crouching under a couch. And they still tell how all the MacNishes in Strathearn and Strathallan are descended from that one boy. As for the boat, the brothers abandoned that in the heather at the head of Glen Tarken, and for many a long year it lay rotting there in token of that night's wild work.

The carrying of great weights, by the way, would seem to have been a special accomplishment of these MacNabs. There is a mighty slab of stone in that burying-ground of theirs, carved with the rough outlines of a man's figure, which an old tradition declares to have been borne thither on the shoulders of twelve clansmen from the rocky summit of Ben Lawers.

Achmore House, which lies in its wooded policies behind the present Kinnell, is famed for its famous vine, a tree of great age and remarkable size, sometimes stated to be half as large again as the vine at Hampton Court. This property came into the

possession of the Breadalbane family after the decay of the MacNabs had set in, and the present mansion, in a not very apposite style of architecture, replaced a much smaller house in the seventies of last century.

Finlarig is a seat of greater antiquity, and the ruins of the Castle are Killin's chief antiquarian possession. They stand on the other side of the Lochay, half-way down the road to Killin Pier on the loch, on the smaller of two prominences—a pile that well deserves the too lightly applied epithet "picturesque." Finlarig was probably built about 1523, although the charter of the

THE LOCHAY AT KILLIN

lands was granted to Sir Duncan Campbell, the laird of Glenorchy, twenty years earlier. "Black Duncan of the Cowl" was the forceful name of this forceful man; his dungeons, chains, block, and hanging-tree are evidence of the feudal type of rule he personified; there is nothing to be surprised at in the power wielded by these Campbells hereabouts. Their sway had spread a long way eastward from their home, and the MacGregors, of course, had had to pay heavily for the aggrandisements of the Campbells.

> "Glenorchy's proud mountain, Colchurn and her towers,
> Glenstrae and Glen Lyon no longer are ours!"

And there was a sharp point in Black Duncan's reply when someone asked him why he was building this stronghold of Finlarig at the

bounds of his property rather than in its heart. "I will birse yont," said he. And sure enough, he and his descendants drove their way a long stride beyond Finlarig: the Breadalbane lands, in their day, drove a great wedge across these central Highlands.

Finlarig was but one of seven castles built by this ambitious man, and it was the scene of many troublous happenings. About 1645 a daughter of the house was being married to a Menzies, and a great gathering of guests was assembled in the castle, when a band of the Keppoch MacDonalds was espied making their way northward across the slopes of Stronachlachan, driving the cattle they had brought from a marauding raid in Strathearn. The bridegroom had served under the banners of Gustavus Adolphus, and was instantly impressed to lead a party in pursuit. With the cool head of an experienced campaigner, he tried to lead his angry Campbells by a circuitous route which would cut off the intruders in the most approved strategic manner. But the wedding guests would have none of it. Off they rushed hot-headed up the hill, and made straight for the MacDonalds. The *mêlée* was murderous; the leaders of the enemy were slain, the bridegroom decapitating the MacDonald chief with his own hand; and sixteen of the wedding party were killed.

The castle was long a place of strategic importance in this part of the Highlands. It was occupied by General Mackay after the Cameronian success at Dunkeld in 1689; and in 1745 the Royal troops made it a base from which some stern disciplinary action was taken in the direction of Ben More. But when Corrycheroch was fired by the Argyllshire militia on that occasion, a MacNab contrived to shoot seven of the redcoats from an ambush in his farm at Innishewan, on the left bank of the Dochart.

The great sycamore close to the castle was doubtless the gallows of these earlier days. There is an old local tale of the laird's greatness connected therewith. It tells how an unlucky clansman had incurred the disfavour of Black Duncan, and was being led out to his fate beneath the great branch. His wife was beside him, and he walked steadily enough until the sight of the dangling noose made him stand a moment and waver. His wife was startled by this symptom of contumely. "Just a wee bit further on, Colin," she urged him, "just a wee bit—to please the laird. . . ."

A lighter reference to the great powers and possessions of the Breadalbanes, however, may be found in some verses, from the pen of a Doune farmer, James McTavish, published many years ago :

" Frae Kenmore
To Benmore
The land is a' the Marquis's;
The mossy howes,
The heathery knowes,
And ilka bonny park is his.

" The tousy stots,
The bearded goats,
And a' the braxy carcasses;
The crofters' rents,
The tinkers' tents,
And ilka collie's bark is his.

" The muircock's craw,
The piper's blaw,
The ghillie's hard day's wark is his :
Frae Kenmore
To Benmore
The warld is a' the Marquis's ! "

. . . . . .

Half a mile or so beyond Finlarig, down the road which runs alongside the railway, we come to the pier and the long expanse of Loch Tay. And Killin may be pleasant, but we must " birse yont."

MIST ON LOCH TAY

VIII

Dunkeld.—Little Dunkeld.—Niel Gow the fiddler.—His playing and his fame.—Nathaniel Gow.—The Cathedral: its rise and destruction.—Dunkeld House.—The Larches.—Birnam Wood, Dunsinnan, and Shakespeare.—Guay and Logierait.—An eighteenth-century interior.—Grandtully.—A grouse-shooting feat.

IN the midst of the low-lying woods the Bran meets the Tay, and falls into step with the strong, steady pace of the greater river as it rolls southward beneath the crags of Craigiebarns. And here, in the deep, narrow hollow, hemmed in by a magnificent variety of woods and rocks, lies Dunkeld, with its cluster of outlying villages—Little Dunkeld, and Inver, and Birnam.

The fine bridge over the Tay was built by Thomas Telford in 1809, and made the town thereafter a more important centre than it had been for many generations. On the right bank lies Little Dunkeld, near the railway station. Its quiet churchyard, down between the Birnam road and the bank of the Tay, has on its scattered stones the names of many families who go a long way back into Dunkeld's history. But it holds the bones of one man whose dexterity and high spirits made him in his day known far and wide through Scotland, and gave a fresh impetus to the native form of music; and we should pause to remember the pleasing figure of Niel Gow the fiddler.

Niel was born in a small cottage over at Inver, where the Bran comes into the Tay, in March 1727. His parents, it is said, made efforts to turn him into the sober pursuit of plaid weaving; but he early lost his heart to the fiddle, which he learnt to play unaided, and while he was still a boy he seemed to know that his fingers would always be happier with the bow than the shuttle. He was right. When he was fourteen or so he had some lessons from a well-known local player, who helped to spread his fame, and while still only eighteen the lad showed himself unmistakably as the coming man by winning first place in a dance-playing contest over

DUNKELD CATHEDRAL

entrants from all parts of the country. The story goes that this contest was judged by an aged veteran of the art, Ian McCraw by name, who was quite blind, but who declared that he could distinguish the stroke of this Niel Gow's bow among a hundred.

The Atholl family were naturally among the first persons of standing to appreciate the virtuoso in their midst, and it was not long before the Dunkeld fiddler was launched on his career in the wider world. Art of this kind is a transient thing, and it is difficult for one generation to appreciate the qualities of a performer who fascinated an earlier one. One has to take something of Niel Gow's supremacy as a technician on trust; but there are one or two hints in the evidence of his contemporaries that point to where his mastery lay. Anyone who has listened to indifferent fiddling of the old Scottish dance-tunes will appreciate the points made by one skilled listener who recalled the virtues of his playing in these terms: "There is perhaps no species of music executed on the violin in which the characteristic expression depends more on the power of the *bow*, particularly in what is called the upward or returning *stroke*, than the Highland reel. Here accordingly was Gow's forte. His bow-hand, as a suitable instrument of his genius, was uncommonly powerful; and when the note produced by the *up-bow* was often feeble and indistinct in other hands, it was struck in his playing with a strength and certainty which never failed to surprise and delight the skilful hearer. As an example, may be mentioned his manner of striking the tenor C in 'Atholl House.' To this extraordinary power of the bow, in the hand of great original genius, must be ascribed the singular felicity of expression which he gave to all his music, and the native Highland *gout* of certain tunes, such as 'Tullochgorum.' . . . We may add, the effect of the *sudden shout*, with which he frequently accompanied his playing in the quick tunes, and which seemed instantly to electrify the dancers . . . rousing the spirits of the most inanimate. . . ."

His collections of old and original airs ran into five good-sized volumes, and were in their way as notable a landmark in the history of the national music as Mrs. Kennedy Fraser's collections of the more purely Celtic aspects of Scottish song in our own times. Niel was helped in this work by his son Nathaniel (of whom a word should be said later).

For almost all of his long life—he died at Inver in 1807—Niel Gow was a familiar figure at the public assemblies and private balls in all parts of Scotland. His home remained at his birthplace, but he travelled far and wide, in his rough homespun clothes, bearing his fiddle and a good selection of bows into all the chief towns of north and south. A great part of his popularity must have depended on his convivial and independent personality. He was a fine performer, admittedly; but he was also "a character." And as such he was relished by the aristocracy of his time, a race who had a taste for "originals" in every walk of life. Even in his lifetime Niel Gow became a sort of legend, on whom all manner of anecdotes were fathered; but even if only a quarter of these are taken as true, he was obviously an attractive and diverting figure, who added the salt tang of rough geniality to the more formal pleasures of his social betters when he came to play for them; and he had the knack of putting himself on easy and natural terms with the great houses he stayed in, simply by never mincing his words or minding his manners. A kind of honest insolence has often been a straight pathway to social success, and Niel Gow found it. There is one tale that shows how far the famous fiddler could let his licence run, concerning a long night's dancing at the Duke of Atholl's. A great part of Niel's pleasure in his evening's work was the supper-table, but on this night there was a troublesome group of ladies and gentlemen who showed reluctance to leave the dancing-floor. After one more reel they must have one more strathspey, and then one more reel . . . until the musician, growing ever "drouthier," lost patience. Up he stood at the end of the room, shaking his bow at them, and shouted: "Awa' doun to your suppers, ye daft limmers, and dinna haud me reeling and reeling here! Dae ye think hunger and drouth are unknown in the land? A body can get naething dune for ye!"

He had, naturally enough, a very good view of his own merits, and was not over-slow in expressing it. But he was generous to the merits of others, even in the field of fiddling. The laird of Orchill was a good player who used often to come over to Niel's cottage at Inver and spend a late night fiddling with him. Early one morning Gow put down his instrument and looked admiringly at Mr. Graham. "Troth, Orchill," he said, "you're a bonny player. Ye should be thankful—for if the French should overrun

our country, you and I could win our bread, and that's mair than mony of the great folk can say!" He entertained the great with cordiality and ease, but was quick to detect, and to rebuke, any hint of condescension. He was one day called upon by the Duke of Atholl, Lord Lynedoch and Lord Melville, and bade them be seated and take a glass of his shrub—a liquor which his son Nathaniel sometimes sent him from the south. Lord Melville tasted his glass, but set it down unfinished. "Ye maun tak it out, my lord," protested Niel; "it's very good, it cam' frae my son Nathaniel. I ken ye're the treasurer o' the navy, but gin ye were treasurer o' the universe, ye maunna leave a drop." The Duke likewise seemed hesitant, and sniffed at his glass before tasting. "Oh, ye needna put it to your nose," said his host, "ye havena better in your ain cellar, for Nathaniel sends me naething but the best."

There used to be much talk, and many illustrative anecdotes, of Niel Gow's toping habits. But they would seem to have been markedly exaggerated. He certainly was of a convivial turn, and had a ready lip for the Atholl brose. (When Nathaniel once sent him a box of twenty bottles of ale, he commented adversely: "It is no good—more *hop* than faith—too strong o' the water!") But he was no debauchee, and he brought up a family of eight with devotion and enough prudence to leave them, when he died, with a decent competence.—And whilst on this topic, it is perhaps worth while correcting, not for the first time, a misconception of the title of one of Niel's best-known tunes. "Farewell to Whisky" is often attributed to the circumstance of the convivial Niel having been forbidden the use of his favourite liquor by his doctor. But this is not so. The tune, and a very good one it is, was named with allusion to the prohibition of the distillation of malt whisky after the disastrous harvest of the year 1799; the ban was in force for a year, and distilling was again sanctioned in 1801—an event celebrated by Niel with another tune, "Whisky, welcome back again!" *

He was a tall, broad, handsome man, and the surviving portraits show it. Raeburn painted him for the county hall in Perth. For all the gossip, he was held in a genuinely honourable esteem

* The evidence for this may be found in the 5th volume of Gow's airs, published by his son in 1809.

throughout his long life, in Inver and Dunkeld no less than in other parts, and in the village where he was born he died, in March 1807.

His son Nathaniel made a considerable name for himself, not entirely because he was his father's son; Niel, in fact, owed a good deal to Nathaniel's work in the publication of his music. He was reputed to have made a large fortune by his playing, with or without his band, at the fashionable assemblies of the time; but illness and misfortune robbed him of that, and he lived for some years in very straitened circumstances before his death in Edinburgh in 1831. He was buried there, in an unmarked grave at Greyfriars. His brother John fiddled with all the family success in London and the South, and was well rewarded by fortune; he died in 1827.

The gray walls of Dunkeld Cathedral rise from their surrounding lawn within sight and sound of the passing Tay, to remind one that this modest little town—which can still take its ancient style of city—was once a great ecclesiastical centre, a seat of piety and scholarship. Its origins, indeed, are ecclesiastical, and its name commemorates them: for Dunkeld may be taken without much doubt as signifying "the fort of the Culdees." The original abbey was founded, a structure of wattles, at an uncertain date, but considerably earlier than the ninth-century building in which Kenneth Macalpine deposited the relics of St. Columba about 860; and the presence here of the Saint's bones, with his pastoral staff and the stone pillow on which he rested his head, naturally gave the Church in northern Scotland a centre of real importance. The very position of the place helped it; for strategically it was a practicable stronghold, far enough inland to be fairly safe from the swooping Norsemen and the turbulent kingdoms of the south and west.

The Culdees had probably been here for fully four centuries when Dunkeld was definitely converted into a Cathedral church and the seat of a bishop; this step was taken by King David I in 1127. And from that year until 1560, Dunkeld prospered in the land. A long line of bishops consolidated their powers of governance, and their growing wealth and authority were reflected in the growth of the Cathedral. Bishop William Sinclair—the famous "fighting bishop of Robert the Bruce"—started work on

the building of the choir in 1318; and it is said that certain small ruddy stones retained in the renovated structure have survived in the walls from that first beginning. The east window of the choir was glazed under Bishop Peblys about 1380, and twenty-six years later the construction of the nave was begun. The work was slow, for it was not until about 1450 that this was completed and the aisles began to rise. By 1460, however, the whole building was finished, and Bishop Lauder dedicated the new Cathedral to St. Columba. Twelve altars stood there, dedicated to the Blessed

CRAIGIEBARNS, DUNKELD

Virgin, St. Michael, St. Martin, St. Nicholas, St. Andrew the Apostle, the Holy Innocents, All Saints, St. Stephen the Martyr, St. John Baptist, St. Catherine, St. Ninian and St. Salvator. Near the altar hung a great painting representing the miracles of the church's patron saint, and the vestments and ornaments were many and valuable. The lands belonging to the see of Dunkeld were far-spread and valuable; under James II they were erected into the baronies of Aberlady (south of the Forth) and Dunkeld (north of the Forth).

But Knox came, Knox saw, and Knox conquered: if not in person, at least through his party. For in August 1560 orders were sent forth to remove the surviving traces of Rome on the

banks of Tay, and the lairds of Arntully and Kinvard were bidden "pass incontinent to the kyrk of Dunkeld, and tak doun the haill images thereof, and bring forth to the kyrk-zayrd and burn tham oppinly. And siclyk cast down the altaris, and purge the kyrk of all kinds of monuments of idolatyre. And this ye faill not to do, as ye will do us singular empleseur; and so committis to the protection of God." The order proceeded to counsel care with desks, windows, doors, and glass and iron-work. But that was a useless reservation. The wreckers did their work with gusto, smashing with hands that knew not to rebuild, and leaving it roofless before the rains of autumn and the long winter storms. From that day Dunkeld Cathedral, as a living centre, was a memory.

Its choir was put into some state of order after some forty years had passed, and its present use as the parish church was made possible by extensive restorations carried out by the Atholl family in the early nineteenth century, and again in this.

Of the long line of Dunkeld's bishops, the most famous was, of course, Gavin Douglas, whom Pope Leo X nominated to the see in 1514, and who holds a notable place in early Scottish literature for his allegorical poems and his verse translation of the *Aeneid*. And he it was who finished the old Dunkeld Bridge which preceded Telford's, though with a long interval of dangerous ferries in between.

Nor was this bout of iconoclasm the only injury that Dunkeld has suffered. For in 1689, after their victory at the Pass of Killiecrankie, Dundee's Highlanders, leaving their leader mortally wounded up at Urrard, marched down the strath and attacked the town. It was held by a body of twelve hundred Cameronians, then a newly-raised regiment of foot; and, raw recruits though these were, they put up a strong defence throughout a long August day against the body of fully five thousand Highlanders, and in the end beat them off to such effect that the back of the Jacobite rising of that year was broken. The Cameronians lost their gallant young lieutenant-colonel, William Cleland (a tablet commemorates him in the Cathedral choir), and the dead were buried between the Cathedral walls and the river. But in the defence, Dunkeld was fired; many of the townsfolk were burnt in their own homes; and only three houses of it all survived that noisy day intact.

Hard by the Cathedral stands Dunkeld House, the seat of the

Duke of Atholl, hardly living up to the massive grandeur of its entrance gate, but a beautifully placed house, with its terrace walk along the bend of the river, and the beginnings of the ambitious Palace begun by the famous "Duke John," but abandoned, fortunately, no doubt, for his heirs, when he died in 1830. The little knoll in the grounds close to the house is traditionally known as the "King's Seat," and is believed to have been the stance of King William the Lion during one of his great hunts in this country.

Here too could long be seen the famous "parent larches" of Dunkeld, which any lover of trees must look upon with gratitude. Only one now survives, in venerable solitude. The larch is a tree with very close associations with the Atholl country, for it was hither that the first plants were brought from the Tyrol by Menzies of Culdares in 1738. He left five at Dunkeld House, and eleven at Blair Castle, for the Duke to make trial of them. The Dunkeld plants were at first treated as hothouse creatures, but they did not thrive and were then planted out in the policies of the house. Two of them survived as late as 1909, when one was blown down; its timber was recently used for panelling in one of the corridors of Blair Castle, and the girth of that tree was such that panels as wide as three feet nine inches were fashioned from it. A great progeny sprang from those plants. The larches of Perthshire are not the least beautiful of her trees; and when you see in early spring that faint flushing along their twigs, and the soft brightness of their young green standing out amid the dark shadows of the firs—remember with gratitude Menzies of Culdares.

Some of the slopes round about Dunkeld, and further up the strath here, are far more sparsely wooded than they were within even the memory of those still young. The War took a heavy toll of trees, as of men, from all the glens. The plantations in many places up there are remarkably inaccessible; but the story goes—it is old enough to merit some respect—that the Duke planted these crannies among the high rocks by discharging his seeds from the mouth of a shot-gun!

Dunkeld can hardly be left behind without a thought of Shakespeare. For the railway station, as we know, lies just at Birnam village, and behind the village rises Birnam Hill, and it needs small acquaintance with the poet to remember the famous strategy of the army in *Macbeth*. When Pennant passed this way

in 1769 he opined that the famous wood "seems never to have recovered from the march its ancestors made to Dunsinnan"; and certainly it is only in comparatively modern times that it ceased to be a very bare piece of hillside. Dunsinnan, it is perhaps worth reminding the reader, lies in the Sidlaw Hills, some fourteen miles as the crow flies across Strathmore from Birnam, and Birnam Hill is readily visible from the ruins of the old castle there. Some years ago Mr. Eyre-Todd noted some curious details concerning Shakespeare's version of the story of Macbeth, from which he was inclined to conjecture that the dramatist may himself have passed

BIRNAM HILL FROM THE TAY

the scene of his play. His theory can only be held as conjectural, but it is interesting enough to deserve mention. Shakespeare, he points out, is supposed, in *Macbeth* as in other histories, to have followed the accounts of the chroniclers. But these tell that Macbeth not only escaped from Dunsinnan, but made a further stand against his enemies at Lumphanan on Deeside; so we may infer that he was not following the chroniclers entirely. Further, he mentions two details which he could not get from the historians: that Birnam was visible from Macbeth's castle, and that this stronghold had a double rampart—both of which are true. Further, he adduces evidence that in 1599 Queen Elizabeth sent a troop of

her players to entertain King James VI; in June they played in Perth, and they also played in Aberdeen, where records give the name of their leader as one Laurence Fletcher. Now this Fletcher was later a partner with Shakespeare in the Globe Theatre in Southwark when James VI and I granted it a patent in 1603; and their connection was so close that it has been inferred that Shakespeare himself belonged to the travelling company that went north to Aberdeen. In such case, he would have passed within three miles of Dunsinnan—and would also have passed Glamis, of which he inaccurately names Macbeth as "Thane"—and might well have gone round to see the ruined castle, when he would have been able to note these details which afterwards emerged in the tragedy he wrote two or three years later. It is speculative, but interesting.

The road to the North climbs out of Dunkeld and curves round the foot of Craigiebarns, above the grounds of Dunkeld House. It runs a straight course between the trees and the Tay towards Ballinluig and Pitlochry. At Dowally the parish church preserves an old pair of "jougs," and there is a hill-road running up eastward from the village by which the walker may find his way up through the woods to Loch Ordie, one of the four fair-sized lochs —all with their virtues in the way of trout—which lie along this ridge of open hills; the others are Loch Benachally in the Forest of Clunie, Loch Oisinneach, lonely above a wilderness of fallen trees, and, still northward, Loch Broom on its high flat ridge of moorland.

At Guay, where the railway station stands, the bishops of Dunkeld had once a guest-house, but it fell into disuse with the Reformation and has vanished. There is an old story that the river-haughs down hereabouts were the refuge of many hundreds of people during a great plague that ravaged the country in 1500; the fame attaching to St. Columba's relics at Dunkeld was such that it was believed that to live in their proximity would afford protection—for the inhabitants of the Cathedral city had escaped the infection. It was this circumstance that led to Dowally being set up as a new parish. The present road was cut through a cairn which marked the burial-place of such of these settlers who did not escape the pestilence; and at the time of the road's building, this fact was remembered with some apprehension!

A couple of miles further on, we may see the widening of the river where the Tay is joined by the Tummel, with the road bridge and the railway bridge crossing the latter between Ballinluig and Logierait.

Logierait is a pleasant village between the two streams. Up the steep by-road that drops sharply into it, one may reach the grassy birchwoods overlooking Strathtummel, through which the road wanders ultimately up by Portnacraig and Fonab to Clunie Bridge. The Tay here is still crossed by a ferry to reach the

CLUNIE BRIDGE ON THE TUMMEL, NEAR PITLOCHRY

main road to Aberfeldy by way of Grandtully. Many travellers have mentioned that ferry and its former companion on the Tummel, and one of them, in doing so, managed to give a very vivid picture of a Perthshire interior of a century and a half ago. It was not a pleasing one, but it is worth recalling. The Rev. William Gilpin made his tour of Scotland in 1776; he did not often complain; but the incident of Logierait was certainly unfortunate!

"Landing on the western bank of the Tummel," he wrote, "I was desirous to refresh myself and my horses. I had been told

that some tolerable accommodation might be obtained for a few minutes, at the boatman's home. I entered the house. It exhibited a scene of nastiness and simplicity which convinced me that the primitive manners of my country were not everywhere lost. It was a low, smoky hut, the door of which could hardly be entered without creeping. The thatched roof was not rain-proof; and all the rafters were dropping an inky fluid. On each side of the door, a partition ran through the house; it was formed of stakes driven into the ground, interwoven with twigs, or willow-branches, and the whole plastered, on both sides, with clay. This simple partition had, like the roof, suffered by the injuries of time; the clay here and there broken off; and the wooden part of the partition seemed to have decayed through rottenness.

"One end of the house was appropriated to the purposes of a bed room, store-room, cellar, pantry, and apartment for the accommodation of strangers. It were hard to say whether dampness, dirt, or disorder seemed to predominate most in it. The other was the kitchen; and into it I entered. Here was a smoking fire in the middle of the floor. I am not sure whether or not there might be a hole in the roof for the discharge of smoke. If there were, it was certainly inadequate to the purpose; for the smoke was diffused through the kitchen, so as to obscure it with almost palpable darkness. Immediately around the fire was a small sphere within which the darkness was visible.

"Here sat the mistress of the family, with several of her children beside her. The good woman was dirty, black, and overgrown, and seemed just Sir John Falstaff in petticoats. The children were half naked, and dirty, but with health and cheerfulness in their looks. They conversed together in Gaelic. I addressed the mother. She could speak a little, and but a very little broken English; the children neither spoke nor understood a syllable of English.

"In compliance with my request for refreshment, the good woman soon produced her whisky bottle, with bread and cheese. To measure out the whisky, she brought a tin *stoup* which by frequent use, by the impression of the smoke, and by the religious reverence with which it had been kept sacred from anything like rinsing or washing, had assumed a hue something between a dirty brown and a jet black. . . . With this vessel was produced a glass which through long and faithful service had lost its only leg and foot; but to guard it against future accidents, what remained was thickly coated over with a mixture of soot and dust, wrought with whisky into cement. It were tedious to describe at length, the cheese, the cakes, the plate, and the—but there was no table:

the good woman gave all but the bottle into my hands; and the bottle she retained in her lap. But even this fare was agreable; for it had rained heavily at times, as we rode between Blair, and the fury; and the exercise of riding, with the keen air of Atholl had sharpened my appetite.

"I cut down the cheese, therefore; the good woman poured out her whisky; the children shared of the bread and cheese; and the mother partook of the whisky so liberally as to convince me that her predilection for this cordial must have contributed considerably to the enlargement of her bulk. Every thing was new and striking. The scene was simple as the hut of a savage; there was the same squalid nastiness, the same aspect of vigorous health, and the same cheerful, kind hospitality, as society is said to present in its simplest and rudest forms. I was in consequence, more gratified than I should have been in a more commodious inn, and with better entertainment.

"And before I had time to be disgusted, my servant having also obtained refreshment for the horses and himself, called me to proceed on my journey."

Which he forthwith did. And one feels that there was something very expressive in the reverend gentleman's black-coated back as he rode out from the village of Logierait!

Grandtully Castle lies close to this other road up Strath Tay, a few miles on the hither side of Aberfeldy. It is a handsome pile of dark gray stone, the oldest part of which dates from the middle of the sixteenth century. In recent years it acquired a new access of fame in becoming the summer residence of Earl Beatty, and its grouse moors have long been famous as among the best in the county. A remarkable achievement in the annals of grouse-shooting was recorded here in the season of 1871, when its then tenant, the Maharajah Duleep Singh, went out on the Twelfth accompanied only by two loaders, with three breech-loading guns, and between five o'clock in the morning and the late afternoon bagged no fewer than two hundred and twenty brace of grouse! An unusual party—but no mean feat!

From the other bank of the Tay here, the ascent of Farragon Hill may easily be made. It is no great matter as climbing, and the height of the rounded, knobbly summit is hardly more than 2500 feet; but the view from the top is remarkable—better than many from higher peaks reached with greater toil.

IX

The Pass of Drumochter.—The Great North Road.—Wade's men and the Council's navvies.—Prince Charles Edward on the road.—Glen Garry to Struan.—Alexander Robertson of Struan.—His adventures.—His poetry.—His death.—Burns and the Falls of Bruar.—The Dukes of Atholl.—Blair Castle.—The 1st Duke's poem in confinement.—The Atholl Gathering.—Glen Tilt.—Killiecrankie.

THE main Northern gateway into Perthshire is surely the finest to eye and spirit—the steep Pass of Drumochter that leads into Glen Garry. The county march crosses the road at the foot of the dark mass of the Boar of Badenoch, and beside that, facing it across the desolate corrie between them, rises the Atholl Sow. The road here has climbed to some fifteen hundred feet; the bare hills of two great deer-forests beset it on either hand; except in summer, the sun is soon down behind them, and on the whole one's memory of the Pass of Drumochter is one of long shadows and a great loneliness, traversed only by the stretching nerves of railway and road that seem to keep so companionably close to each other for many a long mile through this difficult wilderness.

Until a few years ago this road had very much the character of its old form—it was easy to think of the old Highland gentlemen or the Highland men-at-arms coming down it. But even in its new form—and its refashioning was no mean piece of road-engineering—this main road north and south through the heart of Inverness-shire and Perthshire, with straightened edges and widened bridges, has not lost its essential character. It is still a long and lonely way from Dalwhinnie, beyond the march, down to the scant comfort of Dalnaspidal, and another long leap thereafter to Struan and Blair Atholl. Up by the county march the railway touches the highest point of any railway in these islands—how laboriously the old green coaches of the one-time Highland Railway used to grind up that gradient, how gladly rush downward!—

and a large board informs the observant traveller (or used to do so) of his proud position at that point. And there is a corresponding monument on the roadside, not far off, which commemorates the fact that there General Wade's main working-parties, who drove this road through the hills, one from Inverness and the other from Dunkeld, met and completed their common task in the year 1729.

Mr. Neil Munro has written better than anyone of the making of these great Highland roads and the ardours that went to it. But it was easy enough to picture it all as one watched, two or three years ago, the navvy gangs at work at some of the difficult patches hereabouts, far from towns or villages; the same stubborn rocks rang dull beneath the pickaxes, the same hill-burns washed away new-made conduits, the same scudding showers came down from the hillsides to quench the cooking-fires, and settled down, in the quick autumn dusk, to a drumming all-night rain on the tents and huts of the advance-guard.

. . . . . .

Dalnaspidal is a bleak spot, a cluster of houses dependent on the railway-station. It was not so notable a landmark in the old days as Dalnacardoch, five miles further down the glen, which was a coaching inn of some note. But of Dalnaspidal one remembers the fine glimpse, over to the west, of the pointed head of Loch Garry, stretching away into its narrow hiding-place among the hills over there.

It was this way, of course, that Prince Charles came south in the fateful summer of 1745. For a long way we may follow his march as we go down this way. In that remarkable collection of Jacobite papers known as *The Lyon in Mourning*, compiled by Bishop Forbes, there are some entries which take us all the way down this glen—and beyond. It is worth glancing at them for a moment: they were noted from conversation with one who accompanied the Prince:

"August 30th. The Prince and his army were at Dalnacardoch a publick house in Wade's road, as appears from a letter written by the Duke of Athol to [Mrs. Robertson of Lude] desiring her to repair to Blair Castle to put it in some order, and to do the honours of that house when the Prince should happen to come there, which he did the day following, August 31st. . . .

"When the Prince was at Blair he went into the garden, and

taking a walk upon the bowling-green, he said he had never seen a bowling-green before. Upon which the above lady called for some bowls that he might see them; but he told her that he had got a present of some bowls sent him as a curiosity to Rome from England.

"September 2nd. He left Blair and went to the house of Lude, where he was very cheerful and took his share in several dances, such as minuets, Highland reels (the first reel the Prince called for was, 'This is not mine ain house,' etc.), and a Strathspey minuet.

"September 3rd. He was at Dunkeld, and next day he dined at Nairn House, where some of the company happening to observe

ON THE TUMMEL NEAR PITLOCHRY

what a thoughtful state his father would now be in from the consideration of those dangers and difficulties he had to encounter with, and that upon this account he was much to be pitied, because his mind behoved to be so much upon the rack—the Prince replied that he did not half so much pity his father as his brother. 'For,' said he, 'the king has been inured to disappointments and distresses, and has learnt to bear up easily under the disappointments of life. But poor Hary! his young and tender years make him much to be pitied, for few brothers love as we do!'"

But this chronicle has outstripped us, by far. The Garry tumbles fast down its glen, but it takes a long time to reach Struan and touch hands there with the Erochy. And there we may pause a little. For Struan is a small place with a great charm.

Turning from the main road at the Calvine corner, we pass over the Garry and under the railway, and then turn again down a still narrower road that runs down by the Erochy to the sequestered cluster of cottages above its right bank. Not many villages hereabouts are so graciously set, the church, the churchyard, the houses all blending so kindly with each other and with their background of trees. Standing here, and especially in the walled churchyard, one's memory turns to the Robertsons who once held such sway over wide territories here and westward and added the name of Struan to their own. From here all the way to Rannoch we might follow traces of the Robertsons of Struan—up Glen Erochy here, and down over the shoulder of Ben a Chullaich to Dunalastair, where, close to the deep pools of Tummel, their chiefs lie buried.

They were a long line. But of all these Robertsons of Struan (or Strowan, as formerly it was often written), the most individual was Alexander, thirteenth baron of his line, and here or over at Dunalastair—the Mount Alexander that he loved so well in prosperity and adversity—it is worth pausing to commemorate him: even to do so at some length, for he has in some ways, I think, been unduly neglected. There was a streak of genius running through all his wildness and gallantry. He was a figure of whom one would gladly have many more personal details than are actually extant; but as even these are nowadays seldom remembered, let us make him some amends.

Alexander Robertson was a second son, and the exact date of his birth is uncertain; but we may take it to have been 1670 or thereabouts. And being but a second son of the chief's, he was evidently not designed for a life in the heart of the clan, but was sent to the university of St. Andrews to be educated for the Church. While he was still thus engaged, his father and elder brother both died unexpectedly, during 1688, and he was left the successor to the Struan estates and the Struan chieftaincy. On top of this came the news of the Revolution. Alexander's blood, you may be sure, was quickly roused, and he threw down his gown and made off to join Bonny Dundee. His mother (by birth a Baillie of Letham) was startled, and tried to induce his uncle to check this headstrong action of a boy with great possessions to lose. In May 1689 she wrote from Carie, on Loch Rannoch, appealing for

their help : " he is going to Badenoch just now," she said. " For Christ's sake come in all haste and stop him, for he will not be advised by me." But Alexander had cast his die, and this was the first overt act in a long life of cavalierly rebellion. He did not, as a matter of fact, take part in the battle of Killiecrankie itself, although Dundee made Struan his headquarters until just before the fight. But along with one of the Menzies, he rode down Strathtay with an advance-guard of King James's troops and proceeded towards Perth. Here, however, the Robertson men were forced back and dispersed by a body of Mackay's troops, and for his share in these happenings young Struan was attainted by Parliament in the following year and all his estates declared forfeit.

He fled to France. And there, like many Scottish gentlemen in similar plight, he kicked his heels for a time at the strange, unreal Court of St. Germains, and saw some active service with the French armies. His exile, however, was not too long to harm him with the ineffectual idleness that such adventures often entailed, for in 1703, after Queen Anne had ascended the throne, a remission of the penalties attaching to him was granted, and he returned to Struan. The legal process of remission, however, was not formally completed, and the forfeiture of the estates was never legally repealed.

But he kept clear of any entanglements that might link his sympathies with the dominant party of the Hanoverian succession. It is recorded in a letter of the titular Duke of Perth, dated during 1705, that Struan had been " ever scrupulously loyal [*i.e.* to the Stuart cause], and since his return would never take any oath nor meddle with those who now govern." And even in the smaller concerns that a chieftain of wide estates must keep his eye upon, we may detect his political and ecclesiastical sympathies clearly enough : the Kirk Sessions records of Kenmore contain a characteristic letter to the parish minister from the chief. His Fearnan tenants had complained that their places in the church were being persistently taken up by others, so that they were forced to hear the services standing. Robertson put in his word for them on December 2, 1730, in these terms :

" Sr,

" Since my tenants, I do not know by what Inspiration, are willing to hear a person of your persuasion, I hope you will not

see them dispossessed. Their seats in the Kirk are well known, pray Let them sit easy and have Elbow room, Least a dispossession may Cause a Rupture amongst you, not for the Honour and Interest of that Unity, we ought to be visited in the People of God. You, who are a kind of Exorcist, cast out the Spirit of Oppression, hatred and malice, from amongst us, That every Man may possess his Paternal Inheritance, from The Throne in Wesminster Abbay to the Cobler's sate in the Kirk of Kenmore. In doing this you will be Rever'd by, Sr,

Your most hmble servt.,
Alexr. Robertson, of Strowan."

A good, strong, double-edged letter!

But all the time his eye was on the southern sky, to see when next the signals might go up from France. And when the fight began again in 1715, Robertson was quick to join the Earl of Mar with a full five hundred of his men behind him. Mar sent him down to Perth, and commended him to Hay, who commanded the Jacobite forces there, as a man of importance: "You must take care to please the Elector of Struan, as they call him," he wrote. "He is an old colonel, but, as he says himself, understands not much of the trade. So he'll be ready to be advised. . . ." At the fight on Sheriffmuir, "the Elector" was on the unlucky wing of the Jacobite line, and in the course of the confused fighting on the higher ground there was captured, and was rescued by a kinsman, Robertson of Invervack. But somehow he got himself captured again, when the fighting had calmed down, and he was actually on his way as a prisoner to Edinburgh when he was again rescued, this time by the help of his sister Margaret.

Again he was driven back to France, this time for nearly eleven years. In his absence his kinsfolk fell on evil days, but in 1723 the Struan estates were granted by George I to Miss Margaret, who kept them until her brother's return three years later. There was much family quarrelling, however, and although Margaret handed the property over to Alexander under certain safeguards, he seems to have treated his rescuer and caretaker with great harshness. He kept her for a time in confinement on an island in Loch Rannoch, and then kept her at arm's length in the Western Isles until her death in 1727. In his defence it was declared that Margaret was "both an imperious and a wretched woman." And

LOCH RANNOCH

Ramsay of Ochtertyre, who heard many first-hand stories of Struan about twenty years after his death, thought that "there was certainly something peculiar in the blood of that generation. When Struan was pressed to marry [which he never did], he used to say that nothing descended of his mother could prosper." It had been alleged that, in order to ensure the succession, this lady had had a hand in starving her own brother, and it was a tradition in Rannoch that "as often as she went abroad to ride or walk, the crows followed after her in great numbers, making a hideous croaking, as if upbraiding her with her guilt."

However this may be, there can be no doubt that Struan's estates were not nearly rich enough to bear much strain. Things went hard with him. The life in France during his second exile, when he was a colonel in the Scots Brigade, had accustomed him to comfort, leisure, and wit. All three go ill with such a lairdship as his. He was welcome in the drawing-rooms of Edinburgh—but how could he get there with creditors barring his way? He had wide estates and wide powers—but he lived in low thatched houses here and there, for his own houses had been destroyed in war. But he had pride and dignity always. So long as a creditor was content simply with his word of honour, so long did he strive to pay what he owed. But bonds, bills, lawyer's letters—he would have none of these, and the creditor might wait: "Oh, that man has security on my estate," said he; "then let him make the most of it!" And Ramsay tells how "one messenger more fearless than the rest broke through and apprehended him in his garden at Carie. So far from resistance, he treated the man with great hospitality; but the women of the neighbourhood tore and seized the catchpole, spite of all Struan could say, and stripping him stark naked, kept him under the spout of a mill-wheel till the poor creature was almost killed with cold. For this the chieftain was tried at Perth—but acquitted for want of evidence."

By the time that Prince Charles landed in Scotland, Struan Robertson was at least seventy-five. He was too old to fight, but he duly sallied forth on the third of his rebellions as a sympathetic and encouraging camp-follower. His clan did not come out in the 'Forty-five as a whole, but six or seven score of Robertson's tenants from Rannoch joined the men of Atholl. Old Struan got as far as Prestonpans. But after that he was persuaded to return

home. However, the Jacobite leaders clearly held this veteran in affectionate honour; for they sent him back to his humble house at Carie in Sir John Cope's captured carriage, and clad in Sir John's captured furs. The story is told of how "in marching south, Struan lodged with Mr. Simpson, minister of Dunblane, a worthy pleasant man. Being antipodes in politics, much good-humoured irony passed between them. On the chief's return, in Cope's chaise, and arrayed in his furs, Mr. Simpson met him on the bridge. 'Struan,' said the latter, 'you come back in better order than you went.'—'Oh,' replied the wit, 'all the effects of *your* prayers, Mr. Simpson.'"

After Culloden, the Government seems to have felt that this last escapade of old Robertson's was too harmless to punish; and this time he escaped proscription. Sustained by his favourite "meridians" of Atholl brose, the veteran lived on a few years longer, and died at Carie on April 18th, 1749. When they buried him at Struan, his body was borne there all the eighteen miles of road through the heart of the Struan country, and there were two thousand men gathered in his honour.

His name is often mentioned as that of a poet; but you will find few indeed who have read his verses. In many respects they are unjustly neglected, and the best of them have been wrongly overlooked by the anthologists—on whom poetic fame, alas! so often and so fortuitously depends. But they are hard to come by, especially in the original unpruned edition which appeared soon after his death. "*Poems on Various Subjects and Occasions by the Honourable Alexander Robertson of Struan, Esq.—Edinburgh. Printed for Ch. Alexander, and sold at his House in Geddes's Close; where Subscribers may call for their Copies*"—so reads the old title-page. It is a queer gallimaufry of serious and flippant verses, love songs and drinking songs, religious and meditative poems, political epigrams, and a highly-seasoned sprinkling of bawdy verses—the sort of amusement he doubtless took when in his cups, and which has probably helped, in a Puritan land, to obliterate the memory of much serious and well-turned work. (In a later edition of the poems these racy morsels were plucked out, and it was explained that they were never meant to be collected or printed.)

Many of the poems celebrate the beauties of Dunalastair, or "Mount Alexander" as the Augustan taste of the day preferred

it. Struan was heartbroken at his exile from the hillsides and woods that he loved, and there is a long pæan of grief—none the less heartfelt for all its formal quality—over his enforced departure from these well-cherished scenes and familiar delights. He hails the "pretty feathered Quire," and condoles with them because—

> "A barb'rous unrelenting Throng
> Cuts down your Bow'rs with ev'ry Tree,
> Revenging your melodious Song
> Meerly because you sung for me."

To his "lovely Fountain" he throws the appeal:

> "Be muddy still, if any Wretch begin
> A Health to Tyrants, or Success to Sin!"

To which Argentinus, the silvery god of the spring, makes loyal answer:

> "By this my Godhead, till thy face return,
> I'll pour out Arsnick, or I'll close my Urn."

Here, again, is a pleasing inscription to be placed "Over the Gate of Mount Alexander"—

> "In this small Spot whole Paradise you'll see,
> With all its Plants but the forbidden Tree;
> Here every Sort of Animals you'll find
> Subdu'd, but Woman who betray'd Mankind;
> All Kinds of Insects too their Shelter take
> Within these happy Groves, except the Snake;
> In fine, there's nothing pois'nous here inclos'd,
> But all is pure as Heav'n at first dispos'd;
> Woods, Hills, and Dales, with Milk and Corns abound.
> Traveller, pull off thy Shoes—'tis holy Ground."

And in an "Epigram" he compresses a wealth of strong feeling highly typical of the man:

> "Thou hat'st the World, because 'tis rare to find
> Or Truth in Words, or Probity in Mind;
> Athole, or Heav'n, must be the Man's Retreat,
> Who would not hear a Lie, nor see a Cheat."

The rhythms and sentiments of this drinking-song are more familiar; but they are spirited and deftly turned:

> "Since Loyalty is still the same,
> Whether it win or lose the Game,
> To flinch it were a burning Shame,
> Since Mar has gained a Battle;
> Let each brave true-hearted Scot
> Improve the Vict'ry he has got,
> Resolving all shall go to Pot,
> Or James the Eighth to settle.

" Let those unmanly Men of Fears,
With downcast Looks and hanging Ears,
Who think each Shadow that appears
An Enemy pursuing;
Let such faint-hearted Souls begone,
The Dangers of the Field to shun
We'll make Argyll once more to run,
And think on what he's doing.

" Can poor Low-Country Water-Rats
Withstand our furious Mountain-Cats,
The Dint of whose well-armed Patts,
So fatally confoundeth,
When many Hundred warlike Men,
Were so well cut and so well slain,
That they can scarce get up again,
When the last Trumpet soundeth ?

" Come, here's to the victorious Mar,
Who bravely first conceiv'd the War,
And to all those who went so far,
To shake off Union's Slav'ry;
When Fighting for so noble a Cause,
As King, and Liberty, and Laws,
Must from their Foes ev'n force Applause,
In spight of their own Knav'ry."

But the poem which, it seems to me, is most unduly neglected, and argues a mind and spirit of no common mould is a very curious one—a little rough in execution, but driving deep into the core of the spiritual experience which it embodies. It is entitled, " The Capricious " and runs as follows :

" When on my helpless Bed I gasping ly,
Expecting the last Stroke of Nature's Hand,
When no Relief is left, but I must die,
Might I the hated Universe command,

" With what Delight my Senses should expose,
If, in Obedience to my powerful Nod,
The mighty Fabrick should, at my Desire,
Tremble a Shock by some avenging God.

" This petty Globe of Earth, that's but a Span,
When we compare it to the All so vast,
Should, with its haughty Favorite call'd Man,
Dissolve to crumbled Atoms by my Blast.

" Roused by Offence, I'd all the Heav'ns confound,
While 'tis designed to crush my little World,
And in my Rage the rolling Orbs around
Should be to Nothing's ancient Bosom hurl'd.

" Just as the daily Labourer, who tryes
To ease his weary Limbs with needful Rest,
Blows at the Lamp, obnoxious to his Eyes
When gentle Sleep becomes a welcome Guest.

" So, when eternal Night would seal my Eyes,
And Life's no more than if't had ne'er begun,
Since useless Rays instruct not where I ly,
I'd with my latest Breath puff out the Sun.

" Thus Nature's Workmanship I'd quite deface,
And all should perish by my Indignation,
Nor should I leave so much as mighty Space,
Lest idle Gods should raise a new Creation."

ON THE GARRY AT BLAIR ATHOLL

Here, one would say, the great defiance of the old Jacobite adventurer rose up greater than ever, in extravagant defiance of mightier powers than even the Hanoverians—and it is not too much to claim for old Struan his rightful place as the most original poet of the county to which he belonged.

. . . . . .

But this has taken us far afield, though not beyond the county, and Garry is still hurrying over her stones—say rather his, for there is a virility about that stream. A mile or so after the Erochy there comes the Bruar Water, down from a turbulent run in the heart of the Forest of Atholl. The series of three waterfalls in the woods here have long been famous. They were visited by Burns in 1787, and after his journey he addressed to their proprietor, the Duke of Atholl, the well-known " Humble Petition of Bruar

Water," in which, speaking in the person of the stream, he told how—

"Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As poet Burns came by,
That, to a bard, I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry . . .

"Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' towering trees,
And bonnie spreading bushes;
Delighted doubly then, my lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks."

The Duke listened, was pleased, and planted. And the trees, shade, and birds are there to this day in consequence.

With these woods we come almost into touch with the noble policies of Blair Castle. A couple of miles beyond the Bruar Water stands one of its large gateways, arched and crested, and there begins a long, rather forbidding wall over which a little further on one may catch sight of the Castle and its surrounding gardens.

To recall the history of Blair or the Dukes of Atholl in any detail would almost mean the writing of Perthshire's history over several centuries. Even to set down the full style of the Dukes is to hint at that: for the Duke of Atholl is at one and the same time also Marquis and Earl of Atholl, Marquess and Earl of Tullibardine, Earl of Strathtay and Strath Ardle, Viscount Glen Almond, Balquhidder and Glenlyon, Baron Murray of Tullibardine, Balvenie and Gask. . . . Further, is he not the only subject of the Crown permitted to maintain his own standing army, which he does in the shape of the Atholl Highlanders? And no one can stay long in Atholl without gathering some impression of the honourable grandeur of "the Duke"—he is a landmark like Schiehallion itself!

The oldest part of the Castle is the tower to the north-east side of the whitewashed baronial block, which was built about 1270 by John Comyn, whose marriage made him the Earl of Atholl, and whose name still attaches to the tower. Most of Blair's recorded history is military, as its construction and position might suggest, and much of it is fairly familiar. Apart from the feudal

struggles of earlier times, it was the headquarters of Dundee in 1689, as it had been of Montrose in 1644; one of Cromwell's lieutenants destroyed it in 1653, and its fortifications were dismantled as a precaution after the defeat at Killiecrankie. It played its part in the 'Forty-five; the Prince, as we saw a few pages back, spent three days there on his way southward, and in the following February the Duke of Cumberland sent Lt.-Col. Sir Andrew Agnew to garrison Blair Castle with three hundred men to hold this strong point and cut off communications between north and south. This move was countered by Lord George Murray, who marched down from the main Jacobite body with a force of a hundred clansmen and besieged his family seat with great spirit. Agnew's men, it is said, were reduced to eating horseflesh, but after seventeen days Lord George's force was, perhaps wrongly, withdrawn by order of higher authority.

A less familiar incident in the Jacobite history of Blair occurred in 1708, when the Chevalier de St. George was projecting an invasion of Great Britain with French aid, and the first Duke of Atholl came under suspicion of complicity. A lieutenant of dragoons was sent up to Blair to arrest him on the charge of high treason and to order him to Edinburgh. His Grace, however, sat still, for he was, as even the lieutenant admitted, a dangerously sick man. Whereupon, after some precautionary moves to prevent Blair becoming a strategic danger-point, the Duke was placed in confinement in his own castle towards the end of April. The incident had no great significance, but it is recorded in an odd little poem which the Duke wrote, dating it May 7th, 1708, during his confinement, and is preserved among the Atholl family papers. It reads :

" I am a poor sinful man,
and full of misery,
but faine woud I doe good
if the Deel woud let me be.

" But he's both busie & strong,
and rorring always about,
seeking whom to destroy,
and put a poor soul to the rout.

" But I'le hold fast to one,
that conquers as soon as he sees
a wretched soul in distress,
that firmly on him belives.

"For he's my Rock & strength,
in troubles he'l alwayes help me
as formerlie he has done,
and sett me at libertie.

"But then temptation comes,
joined with bad companie,
and then the Devil assaults
the well worst of the three."

The glamour of Atholl lives in its most spectacular form in the great annual Gathering held in the grounds of Blair Castle early in September. Of the chief Perthshire gatherings, that of

WAR MEMORIAL AT BLAIR ATHOLL

Blair, I think, retains the most of the intimate spirit that gives these things life; the pomp and panoply of the Atholl Highlanders may be lessened nowadays, but the pride of Atholl is intact and it is quickly kindled in the sheltered hollow close to the Castle where the traditional contests take place. The local spirit in the Highland games has been well preserved hereabouts, and it is easier here than in some places to forget the drilled commercialism that has too often shown its head at the gatherings. The background, at any rate, is a fine one: long may the gathering remain worthy of it! The athletes of these days have much to live up to. The hallowed names of Donald Dinnie or Sandy Mackintosh or the McCombie-Smiths make a formidable legend in the mouths of those who can boast of never missing a gathering for fifty or sixty

years : their feats seem to wax greater in such perspective ! But in our own day, from a list of such names as A. A. Cameron, Ian Grant, Michie, Starkey, Nicholson, or half-a-dozen other such prodigies, the memory of some will surely survive to keep the prowess of their sires within credible bounds. . . .

. . . . . .

At Blair Atholl itself, the village stretching beside the road beside the Castle gates, there is little outstanding to catch the eye except the church—which has interesting associations with local history *—and the original and expressive war memorial. Not

NEAR BRIDGE OF TILT

many places, alas ! commemorated their dead with such fittingness as is expressed in this great block of native rock, unhewn and untreated, a thing to outlast passing tastes and short memories.

The road bends to cross the Bridge of Tilt, and from there we may look up the long cleft of Glen Tilt, running away to the north-east into the heart of the wild Forest of Atholl. It would be hard indeed to name a finer glen. Circumstances have left it untouched by the signs of the century of petrol and swift travelling ; and if ever

* The churchyard of Old Blair, however, where Dundee was buried, lies a full mile north of here, behind the Castle. The old road crossed the Tilt higher up at the Old Brig of Tilt.

a day comes when Glen Tilt is exposed to these influences, one may hope it will be well safeguarded. As far as Forest Lodge the road is a fair one, but after that things are not so easy. Above here rises the great triple mass of Ben-y-Gloe, steep and bare to the topmost ridges, and falling away on the further side in wonderful rock-faces that plunge into the desolate corries below. Five miles beyond Forest Lodge, close to the Falls of Tarff, one roadway branches off to the remote shooting-box of Fealar—one of the

WITCH'S ROCK, GLEN TILT

most isolated in the county—while the bridle path strikes up over the summit and the county march, over an uninhabited solitude of rocks and heather, to Mar and the upper waters of Dee. To those of some walking experience, this crossing of a great Grampian watershed—undertaken at the proper time of year—can be recommended as one of the finest hill tramps in Scotland. But it calls for foresight and planning. Glen Tilt and the high passes beyond have many traps for the unwary.

The Garry swings round into the narrow defile of Killiecrankie

two or three miles after receiving the waters of the Tilt. The hills on either hand close in on road and river alike, and the wide view that we have had for many a mile back is shut off by the steep overhanging woods. The air seems softened and stilled; the voice of the Garry, even where it roars into its deep rock pools, seems muffled. Undoubtedly there is a wonderful variety of colour in this mass of sheer woodland; but there is, I always feel, something oppressive about Killiecrankie, and it is always with a sense of relief that I emerge from the pass, at either end, to see Strathtummel or Glen Garry opening out before me. It is quite easy to understand how the Hessian redcoats came to refuse to march further up the pass in 1746: coming northward it looks very like a place prepared by all the workings of nature for a bloody ambush, or the ultimate bourne of all civilisation.

The tale of the battle is too well known, and has often been too well told, to bear re-telling here. The actual fighting, of course, took place not in the pass—where it could only have been a crowded set-to on the road itself—but on the fields of Urrard, where the Girnaig burn flows down at the Blair end of the defile. There Mackay's troops were forming themselves after traversing the gorge, when, in the warmth of a July evening, Dundee's men fell upon them. There was little hope and no mercy; and for all the beauty of Killiecrankie, there still lingers something terrible in the memory of that night. Blood can leave its mark upon time.

X

Pitlochry.—Ben-y-Vrackie and Moulin.—R. L. S. at Moulin.—Up the Tummel.—Tummel Bridge to Kinloch Rannoch.—"The last wolf."—Loch Rannoch and the Moor of Rannoch.—Kinloch Rannoch, Schiehallion, and Garth Keep.—Fortingal.—Up Glen Lyon.—Meggernie Castle.—St. Adamnan.—Menmore and Taymouth Castle.—Wade's Bridge at Aberfeldy.—Logierait again.

HARDLY more than a couple of generations ago, Pitlochry was no more than a village with a posting inn and some handlooms. As a stage on the main road north from Perth to Inverness, it was naturally a place of some note: the old mail coaches of a hundred years ago left Perth in the early morning, and were passing through Pitlochry about half-past one in the afternoon. Even at that time, according to the *Statistical Account* dated 1839, it was a "thriving" village; indeed, the parish minister of Moulin in that year found grounds for lamenting the growing popularity of the place. "Our roads," he said, "present a scene of the most lively description. Travellers from all parts of Britain, as well as from foreign countries, visit a place so rich in inspiring associations, and so justly celebrated for the beauty and sublimity of its scenery. We are highly delighted to see them, but deeply regret that they could not find it convenient to avoid Sabbath-day travelling, which prevails to a great extent, and which is most offensive, and may prove injurious, to the religious feelings and habits of our people. . . ."

Well, he would find the roads nowadays presenting a scene of a still livelier description, on all seven days of the week too. Pitlochry is still, of course, a busy centre for the commercial life of this part of the county; but it is pre-eminently a resort, and in the season a very busy one of its kind.

The village itself is of no great distinction, but its situation is admirable. Comfortably scattered over the bottom of a great basin of hills, some wooded, some green, some of rock and heather,

ON THE TUMMEL NEAR PITLOCHRY

it has a soft and kindly air which is not, for most people, relaxing. Northward rises the bold outline of Ben-y-Vrackie, an easy climb if the accepted path is kept to, and one that offers a fine view out over the main Grampian range and away back into the fastnesses of the Forest of Atholl. The flanking hill to the south-west, Ben Uan, and the steep wooded sides of Craigour, are one of the gate-posts of the Pass of Killiecrankie. It is always said that, by the measurements of topographers, Pitlochry is the centre of Scotland —a small white cottage on the rising northerly ground is pointed out as the exact spot where the extreme length and extreme breadth of the kingdom intersect. This may or may not be so—personally I have never felt very convinced about these topographers—but the notion suits the place very well: it would be hard to find a place where so many of the characteristics of Scottish scenery, wild and gentle, are so well combined and contrasted. Also, there are few places which make so useful a centre for those who may be travelling for pleasure by road.

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In some ways it is surprising that the modern Pitlochry, the resort, did not grow more emphatically round the village of Moulin. Perched on a platform of level land a couple of hundred feet above the Tummel, it catches more of the hill air and is yet within easy reach of the main line of rail and road. But Moulin is happy in its comparative tranquillity, and its attractive white-and-green inn is the largest feature in what is still unmistakably a small Highland village.

Beyond here the road begins to climb steadily and steeply over the outer flanks of Ben-y-Vrackie, and the elderly ladies taking gentle walks grow fewer as the iron roadside seats grow fewer. We shall not follow it for the moment, except just to notice two points of interest. One, lying a little way eastward of the village itself, is the Caistel Dubh, or the black castle, a ruined castellated structure which once served as an outpost of the conquering race of Campbells. The other is a less picturesque building, close to the road a little further up—Kinnaird Cottage. It was here that Robert Louis Stevenson lived for a couple of months in the summer of 1881; he loved the place well, and he worked well there. Two fragments from letters attest to this. In June he was writing to Sidney Colvin: "My health improves. We have a lovely spot

here: a little green glen with a burn, a wonderful burn, gold and green and snow-white, singing loud and low in different steps of its career, now pouring over miniature crags, now fretting itself to death in a maze of rocky stairs and pots; never was so sweet a little river. Behind, great purple moorlands reaching to Ben-y-Vrackie. Hunger lives here, alone with larks and sheep. Sweet

MOULIN, NEAR PITLOCHRY, WITH BEN-Y-VRACKIE

spot, sweet spot." The burn is easy to identify: the road crosses it over a sharp-angled bridge close to the cottage. A month later, in July, he was writing to Edmund Gosse, referring to himself as "an ungrateful hound who is now enjoying his first decently competent and peaceful weeks for close upon two years; happy in a big brown moor behind him, and an incomparable burn by his side; happy, above all, in some work. . . ." It was a long time before he forgot the keen delight of that summer at Moulin.

. . . . . .

From Pitlochry too we may follow up the Tummel through a variety of scenes.

At Clunie Bridge a narrow winding road runs up under birch-trees, past the joining-place of Tummel and Garry at Faskally, to the Falls of Tummel. Shut in on all sides by the steep wooded slopes, they make a brave roaring as the dark water slides over the

rocks and tumbles broken into the deep pools below. This unfrequented road runs on up the river's right bank to Loch Tummel and Foss, but the chief road comes up the other bank from the Bridge of Garry at the mouth of Killiecrankie. The woods are to be seen at their best here at Bonskeid, and then the road comes into more open country, still high above the rocky river-bed. And from the so-called " Queen's View " one may look westward over the whole length of Loch Tummel, and still further up the strath towards Loch Rannoch, Schiehallion's pointed cone, and the far Shepherd of Etive over in Argyll.

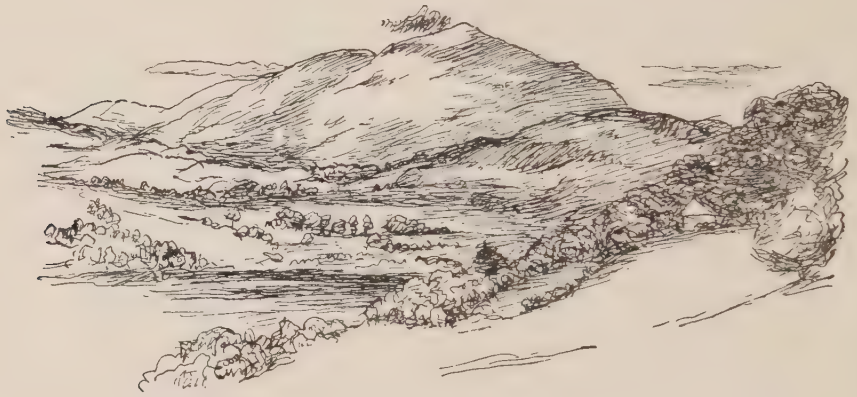
The white bark of the birches flashes out of the woods' dark green as the road comes on to the end of the loch, where the

TUMMEL BRIDGE, SCHIEHALLION BEHIND

Tummel emerges sweeping round a jutting head of woodland. Across the loch rise Farragon and Ben Eagach, recesses where once some bands of persecuted MacGregors lived precariously. And the road keeps straight on, gradually dropping to the lower level, until it reaches the hump-backed Bridge of Tummel and its inn.

A pleasant resting-place, and one that has been known to many men of fame. The inn was a favourite resort of Benjamin Jowett, the famous Master of Balliol, and here he brought some of his undergraduate reading-parties—Swinburne amongst them.

Over the bridge runs the Aberfeldy road, crossing the ridge into the Strath of Appin by way of the lonely Loch Kinardochy. But heading straight on we pass alongside the Tummel to the richly wooded policies of Dunalastair, the large modern mansion



SCHIEHALLION, FROM HEAD OF LOCH TUMMEL

that stands on the site of Struan Robertson's well-loved home. Hidden away in these woods is the burying-ground of many of that ancient race of Donnachie. Over the moor above Dunalastair (crossing the steep by-road that runs over the shoulder of Ben a Chullaich to Trinafour at the head of Glen Erochy) twists the little burn of Moine Buidhe—the "yellow peats"—and an old local story has it that up here was killed the last wolf in Perthshire. The wolf, they say, came boldly into a miller's cottage on the banks of the burn here and padded across to the cradle by the fire, where an infant lay; but the child's mother struck at it with her long wooden spoon, by good luck hitting a vital spot, and the beast fell dead. . . .

And then Loch Rannoch comes into sight, that long open sheet of windy water, ten miles long, and in the far distance rise the distant masses of the Black Corries and the hills of Argyll.

Kinloch Rannoch belies its name by being really at the foot,

not the head, of the loch; and it is here, under the three arches of the bridge, that the Tummel takes its origins, overlooked by the rocky buttresses of Craigie Var. From here two roads run, one on either side of the loch; on the southern side the road runs through the great Black Wood of Rannoch, which can still show many relics of the old Caledonian Forest—a sombre place in the evening light, haunted perhaps by memories of many struggles, for Rannoch was a battle-place of many of the old clan feuds and much Highland blood was spilt along these banks. The northern road crosses the Ericht at Camusericht and meets the other at the head of the loch, where the Gaur comes hurtling down from the wild recesses of the Moor. Here too stands The Barracks, a house that has retained the name of the military post set up here after the 'Forty-five.

CRAIGIE VAR, KINLOCH RANNOCH

The Moor of Rannoch itself is as wild and sombre a stretch of country as any in Scotland, bare and bleak, treeless and wind-swept, with treacherous bogs and lonely, forbidding lochs. Across it the road advances, almost one feels with a sense of despair; and indeed it is a road that leads only to the small, silent station of

Rannoch, on the Oban line, and there stops short, leaving the traveller looking out over the pathless wilderness of the Black Corries and the desolation of Loch Laidon.

Little has ever been tried in the way of reclaiming the fringes of the Moor. The Struan Robertsons owned wide lands up here which were declared forfeit after the 'Forty-five, and the commissioners of the forfeited estates made a gallant attempt at making use of their gains by a system of drainage over an area of five or six hundred acres. But nothing could be done, and only some

THE "SLEEPING GIANT," RANNOCH

faint traces of dykes and ditches remain to tell the tale. The Moor of Rannoch has an unconquerable look. . . .

. . . . . .

But this has brought us once more to the county march, and once more we must retrace our steps. This time to Kinloch Rannoch, and to take the steep hill-road over the flank of Schiehallion—a road which I myself always feel to be one of the finest to cross in the whole of Perthshire.

It strikes off from the church at Kinloch Rannoch, and twists and turns up by the Tempar Burn and the woods of Lassintullich,

where the ruined chapel of St. Blane stands on its rock above us; then grows steeper, until, after passing a solitary little tarn, it seems to be striking right up the face of Schiehallion. The great slopes of the mountain rise straight and clear from the roadside, easy at first, then quickening towards the summit. All the while, as the road mounts, the great Grampian ranges seem to be lifted up to meet the eye, northward and eastward, one behind the other, until at the lonely house at Tigh an't Socaich, high above the Braes of Foss, a good half of northern Scotland seems to be spreading before us. From here the climb up Schiehallion along the ridge is a straightforward matter; patience and stout ankles among the loose stones are all that is needed in favourable weather. A little further on, the road is falling fairly quickly, and soon the windswept triangle of Loch Kinardochy comes into sight, and then, joining the road over from Tummel Bridge, we are dropping down the glen of the lively Keltney Burn.

Over above the other bank of the Keltney's steep wooded gorge stand the ruins of Garth Keep. A stronghold indeed it must have been, well protected by the natural craggy slopes and by the stout earthworks of which the traces may be discerned to this day. This place was one of the strongholds of that Earl of Buchan, Alexander Stewart, the natural son of King Robert II, who died in 1394 bearing the expressive sobriquet of the "Wolf of Badenoch." A wild fierce man, this, who harried the straths of Angus with fire and sword, surrounded himself with men as wild as himself in impregnable places like Garth, kept his prisoners and hostages in the most primitive dungeons, and made long defiance of the powers of Church and Crown. He was buried, however, honourably in Dunkeld Cathedral, and his tomb shows him in the guise of a knight in armour, a lion couchant at his feet.

A little lower down, the Keltney takes a fine leap over its falls, and our road comes down to the regions of men once more, at the cross-roads inn.

Drummond Hill, with some of the finest woods in the county, rises behind the opposite bank of the Lyon; its further slopes are dropping to the edge of Loch Tay. But we shall hold to this side of it and bear along past the gates of Garth House to the inviting, white-gleaming village of Fortingal, which guards the entrance to Glen Lyon.

Fortingal is famous as possessing what has been called, on good botanical authority, "probably the oldest specimen of vegetation in Europe." This is the famous Fortingal yew, two still-living fragments of which may be seen to this day in the church-

FORTINGAL

yard. It has long been only a living ruin: when Pennant saw it in 1769 he described it as "the remains of a prodigious yew-tree, whose ruins measured fifty-six feet and a half in circumference"; and it requires some imagination to reconstruct the whole from these strange, isolated parts. It has been said that the gap between them, which in Pennant's day would hardly have allowed a small man to squeeze through, was gradually widened by the lighting of Beltane fires beneath them. But three thousand years is the age credibly assigned to the Fortingal yew. Fortingal's other antiquarian boast, of being the birthplace of Pontius Pilate, is unhappily less tangibly substantiated. There are remains of probably Roman military works just on the outskirts of the village, and it must have been out of this fact that the local tradition somehow grew. A variant of the story, to the effect that Pontius Pilate *died* in Fortingal,

received startling "confirmation" some thirty years ago, when during some excavations in the churchyard, a large flat slab was unearthed bearing the initials "P. P."!

. . . . . .

Close to the village of Fortingal stands Glen Lyon House, and beyond it the hills close in on the entrance to *Crom-ghleann nan Clach*, the "crooked glen of the stones," nowadays known as Glen Lyon.

It runs away westward for nearly thirty miles, one of the noblest, and certainly the longest, of the glens of Scotland. The reason for the name is not very obvious; Glen Lyon is a winding glen, but so are many others; it has stones in plenty, but so have

THE OLD YEW AT FORTINGAL

most. Possibly there is a reference to the circular stone forts which once safeguarded it, the foundation of which was ascribed to the Fingalians.

The steep woods and crags of Ben Dearg frown down upon the road, and the gateway to Glen Lyon is narrow and foreboding. Once through it, and one seems to be abruptly cut off from the

outer world; the glen lives with its own self-contained life. But beyond Chesthill, where a footbridge will take you over to the steep series of falls on the other hillside, the glen widens out on both sides, and Meall Gruaidh, the buttress of Ben Lawers, rises

THE WOODS OF GLEN LYON

nobly up to the southward. But not for long: the charm of Glen Lyon is the ceaseless variety of its shifting scene, now closing in, almost as if to a dead end, now opening out in straight open stretches of green grass or dark heather or waving woods, down

which race a great number of hill-burns, flashing white on the hillsides after a fall of rain.

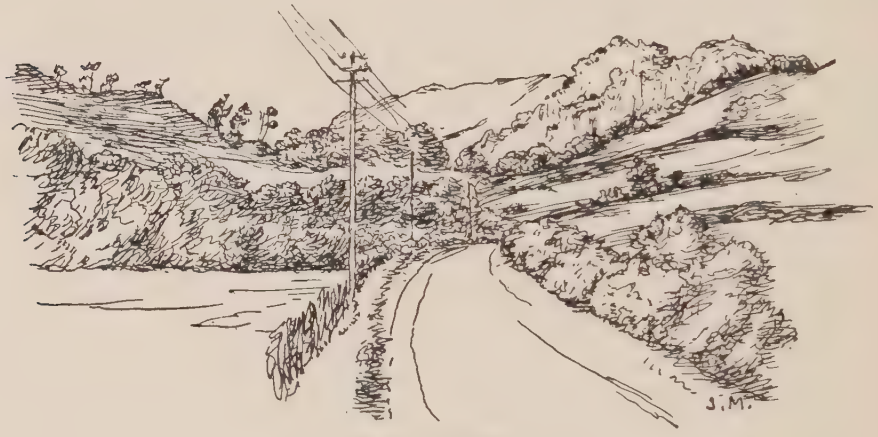
In the defile at the mouth of the glen, where the pass is at its narrowest, is the famed MacGregor's Leap, a spot on the river where a jutting rock reaches out towards the left bank, where a young MacGregor, about the year 1566, leapt to safety when pursued in vengeance by Campbells of Lawers. Justice, however, caught him and brought him to the hanging-tree in 1570.

Close to the roadside stand the ruins of the castle of Carbane

THE BRIDGE AT CHESTHILL, GLEN LYON

or Carnban, believed to have been built in 1564 by Red Duncan Campbell the Hospitable, famed for many things, not least for his entertainment of the Gaelic bards. And just beyond there stands the hamlet of Invervar—a place which, before the depopulation of the glen in favour of sheep and deer (signs of which abound), was a thriving little place with lint- and meal-mills and weavers' looms. Then Innerwick, with its little church: a hill path runs across the lonely hills from here to the Black Wood of Rannoch. Round the Bridge of Balgie, with its school and post-office, centres the life of the sparsely inhabited glen, and a mile or so beyond that, beneath the steep woods of Ben Meggernie, the old castle of that

name stands white and turreted on the green haughs by the river-bank. Its avenue of old limes and sycamores runs up from the Bridge of Balgie, a noble line of trees indeed. The main tower of the Castle was built about 1580 by Cailean Gorach, or "Mad Colin" Campbell, a turbulent man who repulsed the raiders from Lochaber and Glencoe and had skill in repaying them in their own cateran coin, and had trouble with the Privy Council for the forcible abduction of the Countess of Errol from her home at Inchtuthill in Stormont. It has been rashly asserted that the Massacre of Glencoe was planned at Meggernie, but although the orders for that night's work were certainly given to Robert Camp-



IN GLEN LYON

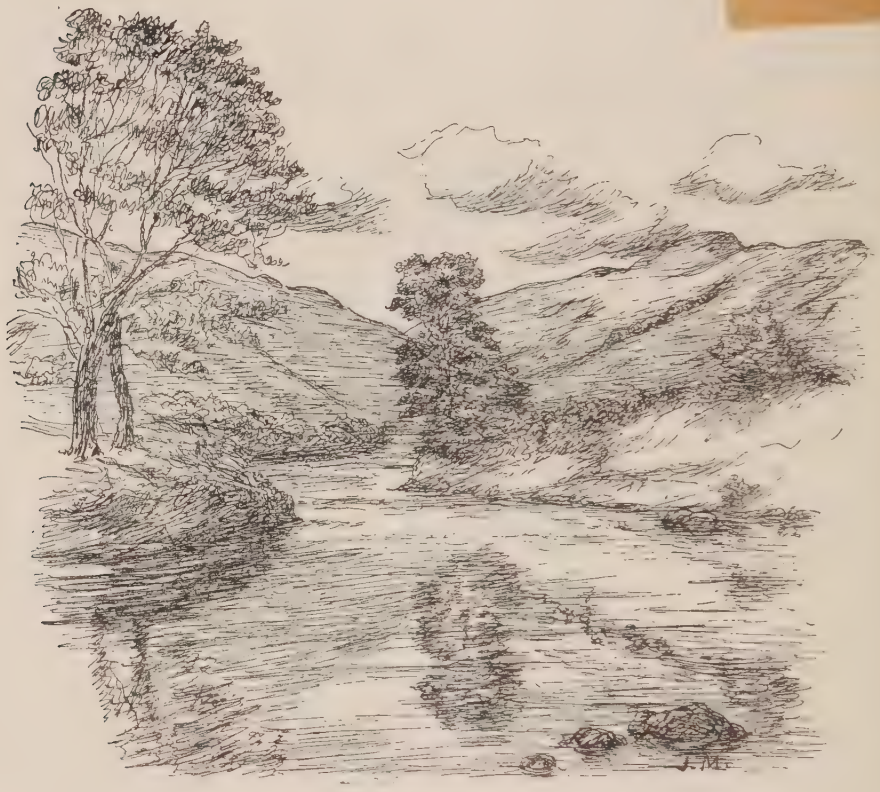
bell of Glen Lyon, and were carried out by him and his followers, the direct connection of the glen with the massacre is not, historically speaking, so close as is often declared. But Campbell at that time was no longer the owner of Meggernie; only Chesthill was his through his wife; and he was an officer in the King's army, in command, not of Glen Lyon clansmen, but of ordinary regular troops. Glen Lyon has been unduly aspersed in this tale, and Meggernie has no mind to have this shadow lying upon its name.

Kindlier memories live on in the hamlet of Milton of Eonan, at the mouth of the burn joining the Lyon at the Bridge. Its name is that of Eonan, or St. Adamnan, who became abbot of Iona in 697 and whose death is placed in the year 704. He was not only the biographer of St. Columba, but also, at some period

THE BRIDGE AT KENMORE

of his life, an evangelist in Glen Lyon and a busy worker in the advancement of the glen's material prosperity as well.

The glen drives deeper into the solitudes, winding round the wide open slopes of Stuchd an Lochain, and past the lonely houses of Cashlie and Pubil—Cashlie, which has its name from the large number of the round "Fingalian" towers to be seen alongside



IN THE HEART OF GLEN LYON

the narrowing stream. Then on, with the dwindling road, to the farthest house of all—the sheep-farm of Invermeran, sheltering amongst a few trees behind a low knowe above the still waters of Loch Lyon.—No, not quite the last; for Glen Lyon stretches even beyond the end of its road, and a track leads on to one or two shepherds' cottages beyond the loch; and up behind them rises Ben a Chasteil, crossed at its summit by the boundary of Argyll, its name recalling once more those round towers, of which there

still stood a few even so far up as the glen of the Abhainn Ghlas.

. . . . . .

There would be many other things to tell of this long, storied glen if space allowed. But we must turn back again to the outer world, and follow down from the haugh where the Lyon, after its long winding in the glen, comes peaceably out into the Tay near the village of Dull.

The Tay there is young. It is only a couple of miles or so up to Kenmore, where the greatest of Perthshire's rivers emerges from its loch. Kenmore, like its neighbour Fortingal, is a pleasant

TAYMOUTH CASTLE

village, and a handsome bridge gives the river a good start off. Loch Tay bends away out of sight beneath the gentle green slopes at the foot of Ben Lawers, and Taymouth Castle, once the seat of the Breadalbanes, but now a large summer hotel, lies in its beautiful grounds on the river's right bank. The present building is an early nineteenth-century piece of antiquarianism, and replaces the sixteenth-century house of the ambitious Colin Campbell.

In 1803 Dorothy Wordsworth noted her mingled pleasure and disappointment in the Castle and its grounds. On September 6th, as she says, she "walked before breakfast in Lord Breadalbane's grounds. . . . The higher elevations command fine views of the lake, and the walks are led along the river's banks, and shaded with tall trees: but it seemed to us that a bad taste had been at work,

the banks being regularly shaven and cut as if by rule and line. . . . There was one avenue which would well have graced the ruins of an abbey of some stately castle. It was of very great length. perfectly straight, the trees meeting at the top in a cathedral arch, lessening in perspective—the boughs the roof, the stems the pillars.

KENMORE CHURCH

I never saw so beautiful an avenue. . . ." This is the avenue seen and admired by Pennant in 1769, who referred to it as " the Berceau walk," and called it " very magnificent, composed of great trees, forming a fine gothic arch." Pennant was also pleasantly impressed by Kenmore itself and its " neat " church; he likewise admired the paternal governance of the Earl of Breadalbane in the village: " his Lordship permits the inhabitants to live rent-free, on condition they exercise some trade, and keep their houses clean; so that by these terms he not only saves the expence of sending, on every trifling occasion, to Perth or Crieff, but has got some as good workmen, in common trades, as any in his Majesty's dominions."

The parlour of the old inn at Kenmore was where Burns wrote those verses of his which are often referred to as his best exercise in English heroics. They were written in pencil over the chimney-piece when he visited the place with his friend Nicol, on August 29th, 1787:

POPLAR AVENUE FROM ABERFELDY
BRIDGE, BEN LAWERS IN DISTANCE

" Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace . . .

. . .

The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild-scatter'd, clothe their ample sides,
Th' outstretching lake, imbosom'd 'mong the hills,—
The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
The palace rising on its verdant side,
The lawns wood-fring'd in Nature's native taste,
The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste,
The arches striding o'er the new-born stream,
The village glittering in the noontide beam—

. . . .

Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre,
And look through Nature with creative fire . . .

. . .

Here heart-struck Grief might heav'nward stretch her scan,
And injur'd Worth forget and pardon man."

. . . . . .

Striking eastward, our road runs through varied woods, with pleasant glimpses of the rippling Tay, with sometimes a beach of pebbles gleaming under the alders. Looking back, the broad back of Ben Lawers and its companion heights rises above the tree-tops. On the other bank rises Weem Hill, with old Castle Menzies, seat of the Menzies' of that ilk, lying amongst its magnificent trees at the foot. And it is not long before we come into the little town of Aberfeldy.

ON THE TAY, BEN LAWERS IN DISTANCE

The name inevitably suggests the famous " birks o' Aberfeldy " sung by Burns. And probably nine strangers out of every ten look round for them. In vain: the birches can hardly be

said to exist, not at any rate in any way to justify the poet's words :

> " The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
> White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
> And rising, weets wi' misty showers
> The birks o' Aberfeldy. . . ."

The " linns " certainly refer to the Falls of Moness, close at hand, but birches are not in evidence; and there is some reason to suppose that Burns confounded the name with Abergeldie, where they abound.

If any tree nowadays deserves remembering in connection with Aberfeldy, it would rather be the poplar. For across the level ground on the left bank of the Tay here, there runs a beautiful avenue of poplars, more regular and better developed than those trees usually are in the north. They start at the farther end of the bridge of Aberfeldy, and as that handsome bridge is the first built by the illustrious Wade (whose work we have not passed unnoticed heretofore), we cannot pass it unremarked. " Ambitious and ugly," said Miss Wordsworth of that bridge, in one of her less apt comments: say, rather, " strong and masterful." It is distinguished also by a Latin inscription, in these lapidary terms :

MIRARE
VIAM HANC MILITAREM
ULTRA ROMANOS TERMINOS
M PASSUUM CCL HAC ILLAC
EXTENSAM :
TESQUIS ET PALUDIBUS INSULTANTEM
PER MONTES RUPESQUE PATEFACTAM
ET INDIGNANTI TAVO
UT CERNIS INSTRATAM,
OPUS HOC ARDUUM SUA SOLERTIA
ET DECENNALI MILITUM OPERA
AN. ÆR. X^NÆ. 1733. PERFECTIT G. WADE
COPIARUM IN SCOTIA PRAEFECTUS.

ECCE QUANTUM VALEANT
REGIS GEORGII II AUSPICIA.

WADE'S BRIDGE AT ABERFELDY

The English version reads :

> "Admire this military road, stretching on this side and that 250 miles beyond the limits of the Roman one, mocking moors and bogs, opened up through rocks and over mountains, and, as you see, crossing the indignant Tay. This difficult work G. Wade, commander-in-chief of the Forces in Scotland, accomplished by his own skill and ten years' labour of his soldiers, in the year of the Christian era, 1733. Behold how much avail the royal auspices of George II."

The royal auspices, perhaps, were not so decisively availing as the writer thought; for only twelve years later Cope was marching his men northward over that same bridge to face a new rebellion in the Highlands. But thereafter Wade's bridges and roads certainly became primary agents in the opening-up and pacification of the North.

Close to the bridge, on a riverside haugh, stands a cairn-like memorial of the fact that it was on that spot that the Black Watch, the famous Highland regiment, more intimately associated than any other with Perthshire, was first enrolled. This took place in 1740, fifteen years after the body from which it grew was formed to keep an eye on the doings of the lawless men in the hills.

From Aberfeldy a road runs down either bank of the widening Tay : one by way of Cluny House, Edradynate and Ballechin, the other by way of Grandtully Castle; but they both converge upon the ferry of Logierait, where we have passed before.

XI

Pitlochry to Glen Brerachan.—General Reid of Straloch.—Glen Fernate.—Strath Ardle.—The Blackwater.—Glen Shee: the Spittal and the bridge.—Up Glen Beg.—The "Devil's Elbow" and the Cairnwell.—The Ghost of Sergeant Davies.—Vanished houses.—Ben Gulabin and the Death of Diarmid.—Glen Taitnach and the "Cam Ruadh."—A Caterans' raid.—Glen Ericht and Craighall.—The Lunan lochs.—The Dog of the Mause.

ONCE again we may step out from Pitlochry, this time up by Moulin, but strike upward over the easterly flanks of Ben-y-Vrackie, taking the abrupt bend of the Pitarrick Brae that leads up to the open moor above.

Up and up, and the view of Strathtummel and all the westward hills widens every moment behind us. It is a bare, open road twisting and dipping, and the decaying white posts with their once-red tips along the roadside are a reminder of how hard it is to follow the track up here in winter, when once the snow has been swirling for an hour or two over the ridge of the Carn Dubh. There is a roadside memorial to an unlucky postman, too, that brings the same reminder. . . . But on a clear summer day it is a peaceful and kindly tract of moorland, with the black-faced sheep grazing the coarse turf amongst the heather-beds, and the wind whistling gently through the butts. The shepherd's cottage in the shelter of the hollow is empty now—its last tenant was wont to complain that he "couldna get his sheep ower the road wi' a' thae motor-cars"—in days when hardly half-a-dozen of the offending vehicles were seen in a long afternoon!

After the second rise, the watershed is crossed, Ben-y-Gloe rises for a moment or two against the sky, and with a flashing of foam amongst its rocks the Brerachan tumbles from the dark heather into the green glen that bears its name. After Clunskea (a house that will long carry its memories of the Michies, mighty athletes and doughty sportsmen), the Brerachan suddenly quietens down, and flows meandering over the flat bed of its valley with

IN GLEN BRERACHAN

the still, contemplative mien of a southern stream, until, at the hamlet of Straloch, it joins hands with the Fernate and the pair are transformed into the Ardle.

Straloch was long the home of General John Reid, whose military fame was outstripped by his musical: for he was the composer of that sturdy old song, "The Garb of Old Gaul":

> "In the garb of old Gaul, with the fire of old Rome,
> From the heath-covered mountains of Scotia we come,
> Where the Romans endeavoured our country to gain,
> But our ancestors fought, and they fought not in vain."

The lairds of Straloch in those days (Reid was born in 1721) were a branch of the Struan Robertsons, and held the title of the Barons Rua, or "red"; it was the general who converted this into "Reid." He was a friend of Alexander Robertson, the poet-laird of Struan; and he left as his legacy to later centuries not only this famous march, but a fair amount of other music of his own composition, and the endowment of the Chair of Music at Edinburgh University. There is still an annual commemoration of the general there, when his song is played to the audience upstanding.

The road crosses the Fernate half a mile beyond the church. This stream has come down a glen of rare charm, unknown because, beyond the houses at its entrance, its narrow track leads only to two or three remote shepherds' houses in the hills and to the distant shooting-box of Fealar in the farthest recesses of the Forest of Atholl. Time was when Glen Fernate had plenty of humble holdings; to the 'Forty-five it sent five or six times the number of able-bodied men that it could now count in men, women, and children; it is a domain now of sheep and grouse, and far up, of the deer—a place of solitary stillness, and of sunshine, for something in the figuration of the hills here seems to open the clouds, and often when it is dull in Glen Brerachan or Strath Ardle you may see the green slopes of Glen Fernate lying warm in sunlight.

Here, in the hollow about the joining of Fernate and Brerachan, lay the loch which gave Straloch its name: the shape of the land shows it clearly enough, and the old road crossed the Fernate by the old bridge higher up. And the steep round hill by the roadside at Tulloch Dhu long marked the march of Atholl: there is an old local story that the boundary was fixed there by the

granting of land to a point where a certain prized falcon could fly—it alighted on that knowe.

The steep wooded hill with a brow of dark rock is Kindrogan, with Kindrogan House lying sheltered at its foot at a bend of the Ardle. The rock is slashed by the mouth of a cave, which has sheltered fugitives in its day; and down nearer the house there is a great boulder known still as the "Wolves' Rock," where it is said that men used to lie to shoot the wolves lured down to the clearing around it.

From Dirnanean, where the road crosses the burn at the little village of Enochdhu, there is a bridle-path running up over the neck between Ben Earb and the Meall Uaine to Glen Shee; but to get there by road, we must head on towards Kirkmichael, the chief village in the strath, still following down the pleasant variations of the Ardle, which runs on, now close beset by trees and stumbling through rocks, now through open fields in quiet rippling over deep pebbles. Kirkmichael clusters round the white church in its low-lying graveyard, where a tall birch-tree leans out over the water murmuring beneath the windows. At the top of the long grassy slopes of Whitefield, beyond the skyline from the lower level, stands the ruined castle of that name, where a row of splendid ash-trees leads up to the shell of what was once a stronghold with a magnificent position, overlooking all the country round. And behind there lies Ashintully, a house with many memories of the turbulent race of Spaldings, who once reigned supreme hereabouts, and well into the seventeenth century maintained their own gallows on the green knoll of Tom-na-Croich further along the ridge.

At the Bridge of Cally, a few miles further down the Strath, we join the main road that comes up from Blairgowrie and the Stormont, and turning northward, enter the valley of the Black-water. The road switchbacks up the right bank of the stream, which further up is the Shee Water, with wide stretches of bare moorland on either hand. At Bleaton Hallet—where there is a glimpse of a remarkably fine rock-garden set on a steep strip of hillside—a pleasant by-road branches off over the high plateau of the Forest of Alyth towards the borders of Angus. And then the round, regular mass of Mount Blair rises before us, marking the beginning of Glen Shee proper.

As we go on, the peaks of the Deeside mountains begin to jut

above the nearer hills, remote and precipitous: Glas Maol, near whose summit meet the marches of Perthshire, Angus, and Aberdeenshire, stands blocked against the north-eastern sky. In summer, nowadays, this road is a busy route for northward traffic, and a reconstruction of its surface in recent years has robbed the Cairnwell route of many of the terrors it formerly held for drivers, whether of horse or motor-car. At the Lair Brae, a white cross is still a reminder of disasters in the past. Opposite here stands the imposing modern castle of Dalnaglar, near the little hamlet of Cray, and down in a field between the river and the road here may be noticed a large boulder that is still known as the Clach-na-Void, or the "stone of justice," where the local chiefs were wont to administer justice to all and sundry in the glen. Like so many of the glens hereabouts, there is a profusion of stones with memories of a misty past, some marked with those curious rings and cups which are inconclusively debated by archæologists, others marked only by the tales orally attached to them by one generation after another. Broughdarg, a little further on, has some such; and up at Inveredrie, near Glen Shee Lodge, there is a rock with a curious twisting hole in it, into which (say they) a certain witch disappeared after conveniently changing herself into a viper—nay, there are even gashes on the rock there, made by the sword of the angry laird whose infant son her spells had slain. . . .

The Spittal of Glen Shee is now only a cluster of houses with a fair-sized inn, ever welcome on this sparsely inhabited road. Its peculiar name, of course, derives from "hospital," in the old sense of a shelter for travellers. It is a pleasant spot, deep in its hollow of hills—so closely beset by hills, indeed, that one is apt to forget that here we are at an altitude of well over 1000 feet. And it is worth lingering here awhile.

The long cleft of Glen Beg runs away to the northward as you leave the whitewashed geniality of the Spittal Hotel and cross the old high-humped bridge below the church. Lean on it if you can for a little, for there are not many now of these high-arched Highland bridges, pitching upward so steeply that nothing approaching from the other side is visible until you reach the peak. It is a fallacy to suppose that all such bridges were built by the industrious General Wade, but the type is currently associated with his name. Whoever contrived them, they are always in fine

accord with their setting, things that seem almost to have grown out of the rocks along the burns they leap; invariably, the tone of their colour merges into the landscape round them; and something in their shape recalls the simplicity of the needs and means that brought them into being.

Stone in a country of stone—there should be no evading that natural law of architecture; and not all the cleanness of design of the new concrete bridges which the past few years have brought to the Highlands will ever compensate for the manufactured air they bring into settings of old, natural strength.

I am no friend of antiquity for its own sake, and make no plea for the maintenance of roads and bridges that cannot cope with the demands made upon them. There is all the dignity of strength and purpose in a new, finely-built road, although it may straighten out many crooks and corners, and although its purpose may demand the use of materials that are far from being native to the soil they cover. But a bridge is always a thing apart. And in the making of a bridge there should be concession to the natural forces that are its cause. The road has come to running water, to boulders of grey, washed stone. And to these things man ought to show remembrance and respect. When he decides to lift his road over them, let him wherever possible use the materials that lie to his hand. The more often his new road can make such a concession to the country it drives through, the more truly a part of that country will it be. It is not a mere question of colour or "toning-down." Even if the concrete bridge of the new road-builders be camouflaged to granite-grey or the colour of dead heather, it remains in this country a foreign thing, and essentially an ineptitude. Make your bridge as wide, as unobstructed, and as strong as you like—but let it rise out of the native rock.—And the expense? Well, I cannot argue with you if you are going to quibble about ha'penny rates in a matter of national honour. . . .

And now move on (but you would not have rested your hand so pleasantly on a slab of moulded concrete as on this rough-hewn old parapet of living stone). The church is perched on a green knowe just beyond. And to peer into its low windows is to see a good example of an old-fashioned parish church of the remoter parts—bare and simple, with the honest austerity of its time: it is just over a century old. It took the place of a chapel of ease

which formerly stood at the side of the churchyard, and must have been an equally good example of an earlier and more primitive simplicity. For when the Ettrick Shepherd paid it a passing visit in the closing years of the eighteenth century, he thought he had "never seen a greater curiosity than the place of worship there. It is a chapel of ease belonging to a parish called Kirkmichael, is built with stone and lime, and the roof is flagged with slate. The door was locked, but both the windows were wide open, without either glass or frame, so that one stepped in as easily at the windows as at the door! There were no seats, but here and there a big stone placed, and, as things of great luxury, there were two or three sticks laid from one of these to the other. . . . When the service

IN GLEN SHEE

was ended, the minister gathered the collection for the poor on the green, in the crown of his hat; and neither men nor women thought of dispersing, but stood in clubs about the chapel conversing, some of them for upwards of half an hour. . . ." But this old chapel disappeared not many years after James Hogg saw it on his journeying, and the present church dates from 1822.

Now Glen Beg lies before us, a glen with hardly a sign of mankind but the road. The water of the burn runs clear over its brown stones in fine weather, and along its green banks there are sheep and a few cattle. But above, the hills run steeply upward in uncompromising bareness, stones, heather, and rude scars of rock. There are no plantations, and if here and there a chance seedling has caught root and clung to life, it is a stunted, wind-swept waif, solitary in a solitude.

The road climbs easily at first towards the Cairnwell. Until four or five years ago, it had many more terrors for the traveller than now. Its surface was a rough rubble of sharp stones, and its narrowness made meetings a danger behind the blind corners where it bent to take the curves of the hill. The "Devil's Elbow," the double hairpin bend six miles above the Spittal, remains the most formidable feat that engines and drivers now have to cope with; but the surface and gradient of this notorious zigzag have both been made less exacting—although nothing can abolish the headlong view down the steep gully which the unaccustomed traveller is apt to find unnerving as his car creeps round the edge of its rim. Still, who would welcome the straightening out of the "Elbow" with a viaduct? The risk, or at least the sense of risk, adds spice to the fact that we are now on the highest stretch of main road in the British Isles. At the "Elbow" itself we are 1951 feet up, and at the summit of the Cairnwell, half a mile further on, 2199 feet. So high, indeed, that even the great bare head of Glas Maol (3502 ft.), over to the eastward (where the three counties of Perth, Aberdeen, and Angus meet on its northern slope), seems a hill of no great matter. Closer in towards us rises Meall Odhar, a spur of Glas Maol; and the road to the north finds its way over a shoulder of tussocky grass and wind-swept heather between this and the Cairnwell, which rises to 3059 feet on the other side.

And here, for the purposes of these pages, we must stop. Reluctantly, perhaps. For the journey down the other side of the watershed into Glen Clunie is the proper complement to the long struggle up to this high, lonely pass. Braemar lies nine miles down from here—a mile or two beyond the county march you will see a fair range of the well-wooded Deeside hills, their contours so different from those hereabouts.

At one time this level stretch of the road was a territory disputed between the two counties and the marching parishes; and there are stories told in the district of the troubles this gave rise to on the occasion of funerals. For it was a point of honour, in the old days of the Highland funeral, that when a body was being borne from one place to another its bearers should be none but men of the parish through which it was passing. The point of honour was sharp and barbed in those days, and even a funeral would serve as an excuse for a set-to and broken heads. On one

occasion, they say, a coffin was burst open up here while the mourners disputed their rights. On another, the leader of one party gave his rivals fair warning with the cry: "Stop where you are! You may bring one corpse over the line—but if you do you'll take five back!"

. . . . . .

But resting a little on this high shoulder between the hills, we may pass a few minutes in recalling an old story of these fastnesses that, in the past, has attracted more than one amateur of the curious. It is the story of Sergeant Davies, his unhappy end, and his ghost. And it is curious, because the death of the sergeant led to one of the very, very few occasions on which the testimony of a ghost has been admitted as evidence by the judicial bench. The story attracted the attention of Sir Walter Scott, who caused the report of the trial involved to be privately printed, for the Bannatyne Club, in 1831; and that volume remains the chief source of our knowledge of the affair.

"A more waste tract of mountain and bog, rocks and ravines, extending from Dubrach to Glen Shee, without habitations of any kind until you reach Glen Clunie," said Scott in prefacing the matter, "is scarce to be met with in Scotland. A more fit locality, therefore, for a deed of murder could hardly be pointed out, nor one which could tend more to agitate superstitious feelings." Dubrach lay over by the clachan of Inverey, and Scott's picture is perfectly just: the Forest of Glen Ey and the glen of the Baddoch Burn—north-westward of where we are sitting—is still a wilderness where a shot could ring out, and a corpse be left, and leave no one the wiser for years, unless he had the supernatural aid of a wandering spirit.

Briefly, the facts are these. After the 'Forty-five, the Hanoverian Government maintained for some years a large number of small garrisons and pickets at serviceable intervals over the Highlands, to keep an eye on the malcontents and to enforce the acts which forbade the wearing of the national dress and the harbouring of unlicensed arms. One of these small posts of the redcoats was at Dubrach, another at the Spittal of Glen Shee; and it was the custom of these two pickets to meet twice a week on their patrols at a spot more or less midway between their bases. Sergeant Davies had eight men under him at Dubrach, and had his wife

living with him. He came there in the early summer of 1749, and appears to have discharged his duties without incurring any personal hostility. But on September 28th of that year, being a Thursday, Sergeant Davies vanished. Early that morning he set off from Dubrach, in advance of his men, to meet the Glen Shee patrol at the appointed spot; and on the way, it is interesting to note, he administered a dutiful reprimand to a man he met in Glen Clunie wearing a tartan coat. His patrol, proceeding independently, duly established touch with the Glen Shee men, and reported having seen their sergeant "following his sport" at some distance. For it was Sergeant Davies's custom to put in a good deal of shooting while patrolling his territory, and he evidently under-estimated the risk he ran in so doing. Soon after leaving the Dubrach men, the Glen Shee patrol met Davies out on the hill; their corporal warned him of the danger of going thus abroad without an escort. But the sergeant was after a deer. "When I have my arms and ammunition about me," he said, "I fear nobody I can meet."

But he was not seen again. And a four days' search was as unavailing as a search in such country was likely to be. There could be little doubt that the sergeant was murdered, and probably for gain, as he was locally believed to carry gold coin on his person, which, rashly again, he had rattled in his long green silk purse for the diversion of the barefoot children at the clachan. Winter and spring both went by without anything coming to light.

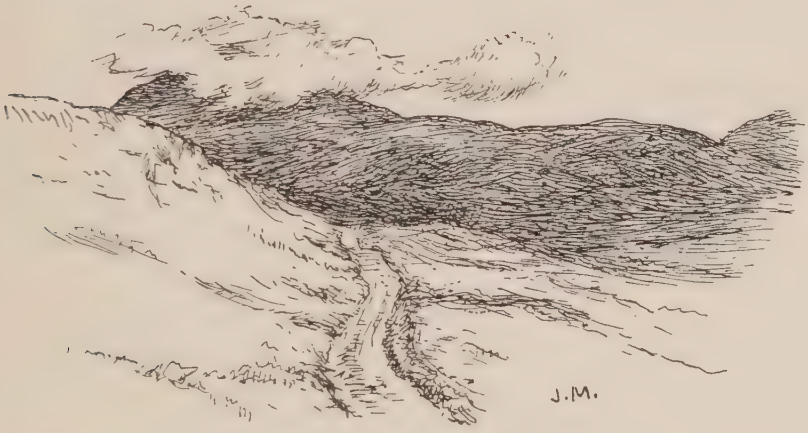
In June 1750, however, things began to happen. A shepherd in Glen Clunie, Alexander M'Pherson by name, sent word to Donald Farquharson, son of the late sergeant's host at Dubrach, that he had something to tell him; and when Donald went up to the sheiling, M'Pherson told him that he had been "greatly troubled with an apparition, the ghost of the deceased Sergeant Davies." This visitant, who was clad in blue, had entered the sheiling, where he lay in bed, and beckoned M'Pherson to the door. Outside, it suddenly announced to the shepherd: "I am Sergeant Davies!"—and went on to explain how he had been murdered in the previous September on the Hill of Cristie, and just how and where his body had been hidden. He was anxious, he declared, that his bones should be properly buried, and asked M'Pherson to go and do this in company with young Farquharson.

M'Pherson was taken aback, but he managed to ask the ghost

who had done the deed. It seemed a reasonable question, but the apparition answered that had he not been asked, he might have told; but having been asked, he could not. And then—vanished.

This was the ghostly sergeant's first visit. M'Pherson went up to the spot described, and found that his directions were so exact that he came upon the body without the slightest difficulty. But he left it where it lay. Dissatisfied, the spectre returned to the sheiling and again summoned M'Pherson. This time the ghost was naked, and more informative too, for when asked again about the murderer, he uttered the names of Duncan Clerk and Alexander Macdonald. And again—vanished.

After this, M'Pherson decided to consult Farquharson. He



THE CAIRNWELL ROAD

did so, and together they went over to the Hill of Cristie with a spade, and buried the remains where they lay, in a peat-moss.

But in spite of this supernatural impeachment of Clerk and Macdonald, neither of them men of good repute, and in spite of the undoubted fact that they both had money in their pockets where before they had none, events moved but slowly. In the district it was currently said that these young men were the sergeant's murderers; one of them even married a girl who was known to have certain trinkets which had belonged to the victim. But it was not until three years after the murder that they were arrested and committed to Braemar Castle, and not until the summer of 1754 that they came up for trial before the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh.

The details of the trial are curious, and will repay anyone with a taste for juridical anomalies. But here it must suffice to say that, although the circumstantial evidence was overwhelming, and although the Crown were able also to produce an actual eyewitness of the murder, a Rannoch man who had been hiding in the hills for political reasons and was able to give a complete account of the way in which the sergeant was slain and robbed, nevertheless the prisoners were found Not Guilty, and set at liberty. Their *alibi*, the basis of their defence, was a weak sketchy thing; but the fact that the Crown had relied so much on the whole episode of the ghost seems to have revolted the matter-of-fact consciences of a jury of Edinburgh tradesmen. The defence made a useful debating point when they stressed the fact that the ghost of this English sergeant apparently spoke fluent Gaelic—" as good Gaelic as ever I heard in Lochaber," said M'Pherson. But Scott is more wise in his comment that " there was nothing more ridiculous in a ghost speaking a language which he did not understand when in the body, than there was in his appearing at all." At any rate, the sergeant's communication from the other world was a good deal more sensible and apt than the average " revelation " of the modern séance-spook.

The unexpected appearance of the eyewitness, who had been hiding in the heather with a companion, is a reminder of how troubled conditions still were at the time of Davies's murder. His work of suppressing even such fragments of the Highland dress as the tartan coat of the man he met in Glen Clunie must have been a difficult business. Looking back, we are apt to think nowadays that this measure was undertaken solely as a blow at clan sentiment, but at the time a great many arguments of a more tangible character were being urged. In one of Captain Burt's *Letters*, which give a remarkable account of the Highlands as they appeared to an intelligent English officer in Wade's time, some of these arguments are well set out. " It is urged against the Highland dress," he wrote, " that it distinguishes the natives as a body of people distinct and separate from the rest of the subjects of Great Britain, and thereby is one cause of their narrow adherence among themselves; but the part of the habit chiefly objected to is the *plaid* (or mantle), which, they say, is calculated for the encouragement of an idle life, in lying about upon the heath in the daytime,

instead of following some lawful employment; that it serves to cover them in the night when they lie in wait among the mountains, to commit their robberies and depredations; and is composed of such colours as altogether, in the mass, so nearly resemble the heath on which they lie, that it is hardly to be distinguished from it until one is so near them as to be within their power, if they have any evil intention; that it renders them ready at a moment's warning to join in any rebellion, as they continually carry their tents about them; and, lastly, it was thought necessary, in Ireland, to suppress that habit by act of parliament, for the above reasons, and no complaint for the want of it now remains among the mountaineers of that country."

. . . . . .

But it is more than time to turn again. And going down Glen Beg again towards the Spittal you may see, more easily perhaps than when climbing the road, how many traces there are, along the banks of the burn, of vanished houses. Nowadays, as in so many of the smaller glens of this kind, there is hardly a living soul from head to foot of Glen Beg; but before the days of depopulation and the big-scale sheep-farmers, there were families in plenty who drew their living out of these haughs and hillsides. Sheilings and farmsteads can still be traced in those humpy green mounds on which the evening light falls so kindly; Cronahernie, the Rhudorroch, Lagganagrain, Cronachorry, and other places on both sides of the stream were the homes of men who would never have foreseen a solitude where their fail-dykes sheltered the short mountain corn or their kilns smoked in the morning air. (The lime-kilns hereabouts, by the way, were well provided for. Limestone of particularly good quality used to be quarried on the slopes of the Cairnwell—and in such abundance that it was at one time proposed to run a light railway all the way up here from Blairgowrie.) But it should be said that James Farquharson of Invercauld, into whose hands much of this glen came at the time when so much of the depopulation of the Highlands was proceeding, made no enemies in these parts; when he died in 1811 there passed away one of the great patriarchal lairds.

. . . . . .

Ben Gulabin rises steep and rounded at the foot of the glen, bracken and close-cropped turf bordering the road at its foot.

The hill is the dividing place of the glens, Glen Beg running northward, as we have seen, and Glen Lochy and Glen Taitnach skirting its southern and western flanks.

The name of Ben Gulabin has its place in the great Ossianic legends of the Gaelic culture, for it was here that the scene of Diarmid's last hunting has long been placed. The name of Diarmid is associated with several spots in the northern Highlands, but the tradition that links it with this corner of Glen Shee is a strong one, with good documentation, and should not be left unmentioned. The hunter's tomb is supposed to be marked by a standing stone on the farther side of the Shee Water from the Spittal Hotel. And the manner of his death, as the tale runs, is this—

When Grainne, the beautiful wife of Fingal, saw Diarmid once quelling a fight of frenzied dogs, she lost her heart to him—for all that he was her nephew by her marriage with Fingal—and prevailed upon him, not without many pains, to take her away with him. But when they came back to Fingal's court after their time of love and wandering, the rightful husband of Grainne devised a plot of revenge against his stalwart nephew, inviting him to show his mettle now, not with womenkind, but by the slaying of a great boar that lurked in the dark gullies of Ben Gulabin and ravaged the fields of Glen Shee. Fingal knew well enough that Diarmid would not be worsted by the boar of Ben Gulabin alive; nor was he; but when he had slain the creature with his sword, after a fight at close quarters on the hillside, Fingal bade him measure his quarry from head to tail, treading it barefoot along the bristly spine. He did so once. But Fingal bade him measure again, from tail to head. Which Diarmid did, unsuspecting; but while he did so, his right foot was pierced by the tough sharp bristles of the dead beast and was poisoned by their foulness. He cried for wine from Fingal's own goblet to save him, and called upon his uncle to remember their kinship and the many services he had wrought for him in other days. But Fingal's vengeance was unassuaged. He cast away the cup of healing into the deep waters of a lochan that lies half-hidden in a cleft of the hill. So Diarmid was left to die; and Grainne, when she knew it, could not live on without him, but drank from a phial of poison; and both the lovers died, and both were buried in the evening shadow of the hill where Diarmid had hunted for the last time.

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THE CLACH NA VOID AND
DALNAGLAR CASTLE, GLEN SHEE

The road through the gate beside the bridge leads only up to the shooting-lodge some four or five miles up Glen Lochy. A pleasant open glen at this end, it gathers up the little hill burns from the stern sides of Glas Thulachan. At the house of Glenlochsie lies the fork with Glen Taitnach; and if you follow far enough up the burn of the latter, six pretty hard miles, you will reach Loch nan Ean, named for the birds, but famed locally for its trout, a spot closed in by superb steeps of rocky hillside, often in mid-summer as still as a mirror, yet liable to be whipped up in an instant by scudding gusts from over the high ridges above.

Near the foot of Glen Taitnach lived a hunter who is no less renowned in these parts than Diarmid—possibly more so, for his figure is cast in a less heroic mould, and his deeds had an earthier quality in them. This was a certain John Grant, better known as the Cam Ruadh, or the " red-haired man with one eye." (The jealous chroniclers of Deeside will have it that this man of valour lived at Alltamhait in Glen Clunie. But I will have none of that.) He was barely five feet in height, his missing eye was merely a lump of bluish, taut skin, and his broad flat nose was upturned at the tip in the most grotesque fashion. (So speaks tradition.) But in spite of these defects, coupled with bandy legs, a squealing voice, and pointed teeth, the Cam Ruadh was famed in the middle years of the seventeenth century as the finest shot in all these glens, perhaps in all the Highlands. His arrow went twice the distance of any ordinary man's, and yet had twice the force. Of his prowess in raids and in hunting—and, strangely enough, in love—there were many tales; but his most famous exploit was in the matter of certain cattle-raiders from Lochaber in the year 1644.

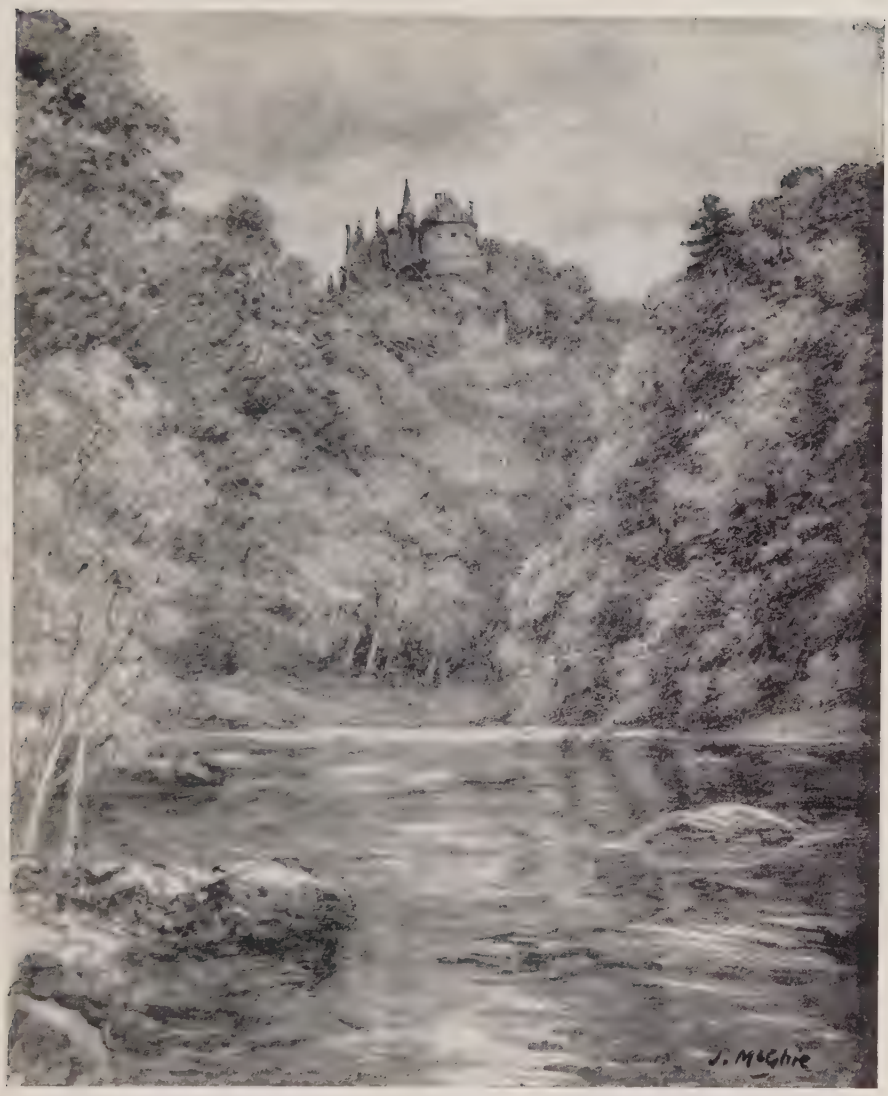
Those were the days when the caterans from beyond Atholl made frequent raids on Glen Shee, Strath Ardle, and Glen Isla, and Glen Lochy was one of their most convenient approaches. Indeed, the hill-path over from Glen Beg into Glen Brighty and the Tulchan was long known as the Caterans' Path. Their alternative name of " the Cleansers " fairly describes the completeness with which these bands did their thieving; and they were certainly feared by the peace-loving. On the present occasion, they had rounded up a goodly herd of cattle from Glen Isla, found some pickings in Glen Shee as well, and were making for their own country by way of the Cairnwell pass, when the men of the ravaged glens were able to make a concerted move to cut them off.

In the early morning the caterans found themselves pursued and took up a defensive position in a corrie up at the top of the pass. And there, at first, they were able to beat off the ill-disciplined attacks of their victims. According to some accounts, the Glen Isla men were particularly backward, and lingered far longer than mere prudence would demand on the slopes of Meall Odhar.

The Cam Ruadh was with the Glen Shee men. But for a long time he could not string a single arrow, because, as ill luck would have it, he had taken a vow on the previous day not to spill blood for four-and-twenty hours! Time wore on, however, and when the sun was touching a certain point on the shoulder of the Cairnwell, the Cam Ruadh knew that he was released from his vow—and took his share. He managed to creep up behind a large boulder that overhung the corrie where the raiders were clustering, and at well-spaced intervals shot his arrows into their midst. Every time, he brought down his man; and not once did they see whence these arrows came. Eighteen lay dead or stricken. But an eddy of the freshening evening wind happened to catch the Cam Ruadh's plaid and betrayed his ambush. The remaining caterans rushed up the hill to put an end to him, and the Cam Ruadh, his last arrow shot, flung away his bow and fled down towards Glen Clunie. An arrow struck him between the shoulders as he ran, but he did not slacken his pace until he was down near Braemar, whence already a band under MacKenzie of Dalmore had gone out to help in the attack on the corrie. When they got there, they fought well; but the brunt of the business had been broken by the one-eyed archer, and the Cleansers were almost wiped out.

His fame as a bowman, and a man of ingenuity, was widely known. At a later date he was sent for one day by Baron Reid of Balvarran, in Strath Ardle, who had several times been the victim of raiders who stole cattle from his folds on the darkest nights of the month. The Cam Ruadh's expedient was to enclose a white cow in each fold, and so to be able to follow the movement of the thieves however dark the night. After his first night's watch when the raiders were out, he was able to give them such a fright that the Baron's folds were thereafter left alone!

In the sixties of last century a well-known local ghillie found a short sword and a bundle of arrows in a cave on Ben Gulabin, which local antiquaries at once declared to be relics of the crafty



CRAIGHALL, NEAR BLAIRGOWRIE

Glen Taitnach hero. It is pleasing to suppose that they were right. . . . At any rate, they were sold to a Sassenach. . . .

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The Shee Water, as we saw, becomes the Blackwater somewhere down about Blacklunans, and continues to bear that name until its meeting with the Ardle in the deep hollow among the woods of Bridge of Cally. There begins the Ericht—not the only Ericht in the county, but the largest—and its course runs hence down a broad valley of well-farmed fields towards Blairgowrie.

Three or four miles above that town, it flows suddenly into a deep, wooded gorge, with precipitous steeps of rock on either hand that hardly allow of any approach, although there are one or two little paths leading off the main road that allow glimpses into the depths below. Here, perched in a satisfyingly romantic way on a high shelf above the deep pools of the river, stands Craighall—one of the houses with good claim to be regarded as the original of the mansion of Tullyveolan in Scott's *Waverley*: be that as it may, Craighall is a truly ancient house, the seat of the family of Rattray since early in the twelfth century.

The road bends abruptly to cross the high bridge over the Ericht at the foot of the gorge, and when it emerges from the woods, runs into the first of the countless fruit-fields that encompass the town of Blairgowrie. We are down on the fertile plains again here, as the rows of strawberry plants and raspberry canes soon show, and the bare solitudes of Glen Shee or Rannagulzion seem strangely far away. . . .

Blairgowrie offers few attractions to the eye. But there is a surprising variety of country round about it—particularly over towards Dunkeld, where the road runs through a pleasant chain of lochs fed by the quiet waters of the Lunan. Marlee is the nearest to the town; then comes the Loch of Clunie, on whose island stand the remains of a castle built by the Bishops of Dunkeld and once the home (though not, as often asserted, the birthplace) of the Admirable Crichton; and then, still strung along the chain of the Lunan, Butterstone, the Loch of Lowes, and the Loch of Craiglush.

Up the Lornty Burn, which comes down to the Ericht just above Blairgowrie, stretches the wide expanse of the Cochrage

Muir, with remains of earthwork fortifications which some antiquarians have identified with the site of that still hotly-contested battle of Mons Graupius. And the cart-road skirting the Muir to the east has a curious and unfamiliar ghost-story attached to it, some years previous in its happenings to that of Sergeant Davies, but not without analogies thereto. The facts, as noted by a contemporary, are briefly these: A certain William Soutar of the Mause, a farm lying along this road, caught sight, one December evening in 1728, of an animal which in the half-light he took to be a fox; a man accompanying him saw the creature likewise, but their dogs would not give chase. A month later, also at twilight, he was approached near the same place by a mysterious grey dog which "touched him sonsily" on the thigh, and left it painful all that night. And during the next two years William Soutar had several glimpses of this strange and unidentified animal; but he paid no particular heed to it until in December 1730, when he met it near Drumlochy and heard a low voice saying, "Within eight or ten days, do or die. . . ." This was stranger still, and William went over to visit his brother, who lived near by, and told him of these strange apparitions. James and William sallied forth together, and again William saw the beast "passing over some ice"; but James could not see it. On the next Saturday, however, William was up before dawn seeing to his sheep, when the dog appeared again, bidding him "come to the spot of ground within half an hour," and once again vanished. Obediently, but armed with a staff and a sword, William repaired to the meeting-place, and waited. He enclosed himself by drawing a circle on the ground with his staff, and when the creature appeared conjured it in the name of the Holy Trinity to say what or who it might be, and what troubled it.

Whereupon the dog replied that he was one David Soutar, and had killed a man "more than five-and-thirty years ago, when you was newborn, at a bush be-east the road, as you go into the Isle. . . . I killed him with a dog," he went on, "and therefore I am made to speak out of the mouth of a dog, and tell you you must go and bury these bones."

The details of the search which resulted in the wood of Rochallie are too complex to recount here (though they are very curious), but the upshot was that certain human bones *were* unearthed from

a shallow hiding-place at "the Isle," and were thereafter given Christian burial in the kirkyard of Blair! A Highland drover *had* mysteriously vanished thereabouts years before; and, as a matter of fact, these Soutars *were* suspect men, who had come to the district from Annandale under a cloud. . . .

And certainly, the Muir of Cochrage is still, on a winter's evening, a very likely place for a man to meet a ghost, dog or no. . . .

THE EARL OF KINNOUL'S LODGING, PERTH

EPILOGUE

SO we are ending with two wraiths, a soldier's and a dog's? A wraith, the sign of death; death, the sign of change. . . .

The old farmer who spoke to me of "hills . . . and hills . . . and hills . . ." had in mind all the things about him that do not change; and in great measure those are the things that envelop our county with its greatest beauty. In any country one may distinguish two differing characters—that where man lives in an accepted mastery over the soil and waters, where his mark of mastery lies on their shape and their ruling; and the very different character of places where he moves, as it were, on sufferance, still humble before rock and racing water, powerless to overcome the solitudes. It is this which lends to the moorland or the hillside their powers of rest, of soothing, of elevation to heart and mind; it is easy there to achieve forgetfulness of human changes and human values. The man who has climbed his mountain knows a human pride as he rests and looks back on his track; but deeper within him lies the beauty of a great humility, the sense of his own smallness and impermanence in the face of the dumb life pressing all around him. . . .

In the glens and villages, of course, change has been working: their self-contained isolation is passing; the petrol-pump and the charabanc, symbols of democratic mobility, have quickened the tempo of life. But in spite of the shifting features of the surface, the threads of the past are not broken. It is still not difficult to link up the present with the past. The clanking bell brings out black coats and sober hats along the Sabbath roads. Stories are told round the winter evening fires. I know a farm where the peat fire has never been allowed to go out for forty years—and how much older that fire is, I cannot tell, for it was brought there alive across the fields from another house, and doubtless from another before that. When certain young blades go out to the

hill now after lawless game, they take a rattling Ford to the starting-place; but the glint in their eye is the same as it was in that of the old free-foresters, the breed of Lonavey or John Farquharson. To watch a patrol of the Scottish Horse riding at ease down an Atholl road, is to see the faces and figures of the men who rode out with Dundee or with Prince Charles, the same cast of feature, the same clear eyes, the same broad-flanked mounts clip-clopping on the stony tracks.

. . . . . .

But in the hills and high moors of the county timelessness is easier to feel. All who know and love Perthshire will have their private memories of these places; and I think of one such now. I think of how gradually, after the shepherd's house at the head of Glen Gennat (I take the old name in preference to the current one), a certain path grows faint, and fainter, and at last loses itself in a tangle of grass and reeds. The last thin thread is broken that joins this loneliness with the distracted world without. Beyond here are no signs of men or men's work, except for an old dry-stone dyke that borders the end of the grazing land. It stands grey and impassive, as it were a dam to hold back the overpowering solitude of the high hills from the kindly hollows beneath. A century ago, perhaps, men must have ruffled for a space the unending calm of the corrie as they toiled to raise it, stone by stone, yard by yard. But now the very memory of their labouring is lost like the sound of their voices, and the dark stones seem to acknowledge no builder, seem to be absorbed into the strength and silence of the hill they traverse.

From here the ground slopes back to the steep dark sides of Blathbhalg—a great wilderness of brown moorland, rough with lumpy hillocks and sudden scoops, and grey boulders that gleam after a passing shower. Here and there a little stream glints in the sunlight, and down the wind comes the rustle of its falling water. It hurries as if eager to escape from the lonely silences where it is born, and turns and twists a thousand times, and once in confusion hides itself underground, before it passes into easier courses below the march-dyke. Across the heather the grouse call sharply to each other, or rise clattering at one's feet. Peewits cry and tumble in the wind, flashing the white of their wings; the curlews pipe alone and unseen. A startled hare leaps with great bounds along

the shoulder of the hill, and lollops through a soft, late-lying snow-drift. . . .

. . . . . .

I think how I went back there for the first time after the War. The outer world had gone topsy-turvy, but in the corrie nothing had changed. Before then, we had no thought of the long agony that sprang to life at the crack of a pistol at a Bosnian street-corner. Young men had not dreamed to find themselves in a few years older than their fathers, or to see the friends of their own generation die in quick procession and to be left more friendless than the old men.

But in the corrie lay a deep, assuring certainty. In the glens below, comfortable with fields and roads, there was change from year to year: new land broken up, old tilth passing into waste, woods cut down, houses rising of fresh-hewn stone. . . . But up here change was inconceivable, and in the midst of a phantasmagoria of mud and noise and sudden death, and in the bewildering years that followed these things, such a place as this became the symbol of what is most sure in life.

Climb higher for a moment. Up on the ridge, where one looks away over the crowding hills of Atholl and Badenoch, lies a dark lochan, sheltering in an unexpected cup of ground. The wind there is seldom still, but under the lee of its fringe of overhanging heather the peaty water lies silent and unruffled. There are many such here and there about the hills. But this one that I have in mind is the resting-place of a king. He was slain in battle, a chieftain of the Picts, and his vanquishers cast his body into the little tarn whence he might almost have seen all his kingdom in the turning of his head. For twelve centuries his bones, his cleft skull, and his broken sword have lain rotting beneath that water; the lochan has still the name of a haunted place. And if now the dead chief walks the hill beside his resting-place, he may smile in his beard at the hectic struggling of little men down the long centuries of his sleep, the endless circling, the fixed monotony. But his eyes will still rest on the same splendour that they saw on the day of his last battle, the great hills blocked purple against the western sky, and above them, white clouds hurrying before an urgent wind.

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